# SERMO

Preached to the

Parishioners of Stanford River

Upon several Subjects and Occasio

BY
CHARLES GIBBES, D.D. Rectour of that Church, and Prebendary of Saint Peter's at Westminster.

Never before made publick.



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# To the well-beloved, the

# PARISHIONERS

Of Stanford-Rivers in the County of Essex, Grace and Peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

N this Age and Nation abounding with Learned Men and Books of all forts, especially in Points of Sacred Theology, I should not have thought any thing of Mine worth the Press, being conscious to my self of mine own Unfitness for that Employment, by reason of Age and other Imperfections, had not your Importunity extorted these Papers from me, which I now exhibit to you. But that I might not be wanting in what I am able for your Edification in the Doctrine of Christ, I have yielded to adventure an Impression of them: whereunto I have been induced by a like Confideration with that of Saint Peter, 2 Epist. ch. 1. vers. 12, 13, 14. where his writing is declared to be out of an apprehension of his approaching Dissolution, that after his Decease there might be that extant which might keep in their Remembrance that which he had taught them, and wherein they were established. It is part of my Rejoycing, that I have had so much Ability as to hold forth the Word of God to you in any measure; and that it hath found fo ready Reception with you. It is that which I pray for, and earnestly exhort you to, that you will never forget the Saving Truths you have been taught though I be buried in oblivion; nor backflide to E

# The Epistle Dedicatory.

rour or Profaneness: But that you be still constant in the true Faith of Christ, and the right Worship of God, in publick, and in your private Families, seeking the Divine Benediction on your selves and Families, and living in mutual Love, and Helpfulness towards all: as knowing, that the faving Grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lufts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purific unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of Good works. Whereunto if this Writing or any Labour of mine may conduce. I have my Desire; who, recommending both you and this Work to the Almighty's Bleffing, do yet remain

Your truly loving and

faithfull Servant in Christ,

CHARLES GIBBES.

A

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DAVID's

# DAVID'S GROANS.

Part I.

# The First SERMON.

PSALM vi. 6.

I am weary of my Groaning: every night wash I my Bed, and water my Couch with my Tears.

HIS Pfalm is intituled to David, and is styled by many, One, or the First, of his Penitential Psalms: And it is true, it expresseth his Agony and dolour of mind, for his Sickness undoubtedly, for his Sins as the Cause of it in likelihood, and so for both; as in a Psalm parallel to this he complains, Psal. 38. 4. which two make a heavy Burthen, too heavy for any man to bear. The Burthen of one onely (to wit, of Sin, though not his own, ) made the Mighty One, the Mighty God, to stoop under it, when he bare the Sins of Men in his own body on the Tree: infomuch that as in the Garden he told his Disciples. Matth. 26. 38. My Soul is exceeding forrowfull unto death; so on the Cross, he cried out in the Anguish of his spirit, Matth. 27. 46. O God, my God, why hast thou for saken me ?

No marvel then, that holy David, though a marrafter God's own heart, and one that was of so bold and

magnanimous a spirit, as to encounter with a Lion and a Bear; that with the most gallant Courage a man shall likely meet with, could slight the proud Vaunts and Menaces of the great Goliah of Gath, and be no more affrighted by him, then as if he had been to encounter with a Child, while by faith he saw God for him; yet when he saw God against him, calling his Sin to remembrance, laying Affliction on his loyns, consuming him with the blow of his hand, that he (I say) should shrink under the burthen, his spirit slag, his heart saint, and he roar and cry out like a Child, as in the words of my Text, I am weary of my Groaning, &c.

Which words express the sad plight of David under

some heavy Pressure, which drew from him

I. Groaning; the dolefull found of the Inwards, Lungs, and other of the Bowels, upon the feeling of some oppressing Burthen, Grief, or Pain, or the apprehension of some expected approaching Evil. And this Groaning of David is with meariness, so excessive, as that it did even break his Heart.

2. It drew from him Tears, which are the emanations of watery moisture from the eyes, drawn out sometimes by excessive Joy; but most commonly by sad afflicting Griefs, which do not stupefy, but affect the

Heart. These Tears of David are described

1. By the abundance of them, They made his Bed to swim: they watered his Couch. Beds and Couches are Utenfills made for Rest and Ease, the one in the Night, the other in the Day, when either labour, sickness, or other malady, makes us to betake our selves to them for repose and refreshing. So said Job in his Calamity, My Bed shall comfort me, my Couch shall ease my complaint, Job 7.13. Now to have the Bed to swim with Tears, to have the Couch watered with his own Tears, is a sign of no Rest nor Ease by them, and therefore of extreme remediless Grief.

2. His

2. His Weeping is aggravated by the incessantness of it; in the Night, made for Rest, and that every Night, yea, all the Night. And in the Day too, (for that is the time of using the Couch.) So that, as elsewhere he expressed himself, he went mourning all the day long, and day and night God's hand was heavy upon him, and his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer.

But may it not be said, Ad quid perditio hec? Wherefore was this waste? what was the cause of this excessive Groaning and Weeping? Scire est per Cansam scire: We never well understand a thing, till we know the Reason of it. Weeping and Groaning are sometimes voluntary and of choice, when a person sets himself to weep and groan; as when S. Peter, remembring Christ's words, went out and wept bitterly, Matth. 26.75. Sometimes they are involuntary; as when the Christians, Act. 20. 37, 38. parted with S. Paul, they wept fore, forrowing most of all for the word which he spake, that they should see his face no more. Sometimes because of Calamity, sometimes because of Sin, and sometimes for both. Sometimes to express Compassion, Tenderness and Love; as when S. Paul by the space of three years ceased not to warn the Arians night and day with Tears, Act. 20. 31. Sometimes for their own Sins and Calamities; sometimes for the Sins or Calamities, or both, of others. Christ, when he perceived the Pharisees infidelity and hardness of heart, sighed deeply in his spirit, Mark 8. 12. when he beheld Jerusalem, he wept over it, Luk. 19.41. when he saw Mary weep, Christ groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and wept upon Lazarus his buriall, Job. 11. 33, 35. Jeremiah the Prophet wisheth, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the stain of the daughter of my people, Jer. 9. 1. And Chap. 13. 17.

13. 17. he tells them, If ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret places for your Pride; and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's Flock is carried away captive. Which he did abundantly perform, when he made his Book of Lamentations. David, Psal. 119. 136. saith of himself, Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law. And these indeed were charitable Tears for others.

But the Groaning and Weeping in my Text was for himself: partly naturall and involuntary, because of his weakness, the vexing of his bones; partly volun-

tary and of choice.

I. Because his Affliction, whether Sickness or other Diffress, was likely to bereave him of Life, and thereby deprive him of the opportunity of praising God among the living; in which he so much delighted, as to count his life a burthen to him, when he could not come to the Tabernacle to praise God, Psal. 42. 1, 2. and 48. 1, 2, 3. Which is gathered from his plea why God should fave him from his present Malady; For (saith he, vers. 5. next before my Text) in Death there is no remembrance of thee, in the Grave who shall give thee thanks? It feems he had some Sickness or other Danger which he apprehended to be mortall, (which is not related in the Books of Samuel,) and that put him upon this fad Complaint in my Text. As in like manner Hezekiah complained in his Sickness, Isa. 38. 10, 11. I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the Grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. verf. 18. For the Grave cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the Pit cannot hope for thy truth. This then was the Grievance which made their other Malady Malady fo disquieting to them, that it would put an

end to their praising God on Earth.

I do not question whether the Patriarchs looked onely for Temporall Bleffings, whether they believed the Immortality of the Soul, the Beatificall vision immediately after Death, the Resurrection of the body; fith Heb. 11. it is resolved, that Abraham looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, vers. 10. that they confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, vers. 13. that they sought and desired a better Country, to wit, an Heavenly, vers. 14, 16. that they accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, vers. 35. As our Lord Christ, Luk. 23.46. and S. Stephen, Act. 7.59. commended their Spirits into God's hands: so David, Pfal. 21.5. Into thine hand I commit my Spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Yet certain it is, whether by reason of their great affection to the solemn Worship of God on Earth, their expectations and apprehensions of God's Promises, or their imperfect umbratile Twilight-knowledge of the Mysteries of Christ, they feem not to be alike apprehensive of the Happiness of the Soul after death, as the holy Apostles and Martyrs were after Christ's Ascension; and therefore bemoan their exclusion out of the Land of Canaan, and their privation of naturall Life, more passionately then feems to agree with the quietness and rejoycing which the Saints fince Christ's Ascension have expressed in their Death.

2. A Second Cause of David's excessive Grief is intimated here, vers. 7. Mine eye is consumed because of Grief, it waxethold because of all mine Enemies: and vers. 10. Let all mine Enemies be ashamed and sore versed; let them return and be ashamed suddenly. It seems he apprehended they would, (or knew they did) if God took away his

Life, insult over him, and reproach him, for his often profession of trusting in God, if God did not help him. So Pfal. 42. 3. My Tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? vers. 9, 10. I will say unto God, My Rock, why hast thou forgotten me? why goe I mourning because of the oppression of the Enemy? As with a Sword in my bones mine Enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? The vilifying of his God, and the deriding of his hope in him, was more grievous to David, then his Exile, or Sickness, or Death it self.

3. Nor are we to doubt (though it be not expresfed in the Text) that those Groans and Tears of David were also Penitentiall, occasioned by the Remembrance of his Sins: for elsewhere is the like Complaint. Sin is that poisonous Herb which made his Affliction bitter and deadly to him; like the wild Gourd, that made the Sons of the Prophets cry out, (Mors in Olla) There is death in the pot, 2 Kings 4. 40. Thus Pfal. 38. 2, 3, 4. Thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine Anger: neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my Sin. For mine Iniquities have gone over my bead; as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me. Pfal. 40. 12. Innumerable Evils have compassed me about; mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more then the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. Pfal. 41. 4. I faid, Lord, be mercifull unto me; beal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee. Where he expresseth his Misery, he doth often declare his Sin to be the Cause of it: as he prays for the removall of the one, so for the pardon of the other; and as he complains of the one, so he bewails the other. And therefore it is to be so conceived here, where he describes

the vehemency of his Groaning, and the redundance of his Tears; which is confirmed by that which he faith here, vers. 8. Depart from me, all ye workers of Iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping: which implies a penitential frame of spirit to have been in David, when he made this Prayer; he abandoned the society of the workers of Iniquity, which is one principal part of Repentance, shewing displicency with our selves for Sins committed, and resolution to avoid the Occasion of Sin, to which we may be tempted: there being no sign more evident of loving Sin, then conforting with the workers of Iniquity; nor any means more necessary to avoid it, (which is the chief part of Repentance,) then to shun the company of the practifers of Evil.

And that his Tears were penitentiall, is intimated, in that it is faid they had a Voice, a praying Voice to God: which what other can it be deemed to be, then Confessing of Sin to God, Complaining to him of his Misery by reason of it, Deprecating of his Vengeance? as vers. 1. he expressed himself, O Lord, rebuke me not in thine Angor, neither chasten me in thy hot Displeasure. Sutably hereto he speaks Psal. 39. 8, 10, 11. Deliver me from all my Transgressions; make me not a reproach to the foolish. Remove thy stroke away from me: I am con-Sumed by the blow of thy hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for Iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; Surely every man is vanity. So that hereby we may well conclude, (without much straining of the Text,) That those Groans and Tears were mixt, partly from the fense of Affliction, and in that respect involuntary; partly Penitentiall, from the sense of his Sin, and in that respect voluntary: and that he mourned (propter malum Culpa, as well as propter malum Pana,) for the Evil of Acting as well

as the Evil of Suffering; for both together, as being concatenate, and the one following the other. And accordingly we may hence infer these usefull Propositions.

I. That when God visits for Sin, the Pain is extreme

and intolerable.

- 2. That Beds and Couches and other bodily Refections little avail to ease a Conscience or a Person that is oppressed with the weight of God's Stroke for Sin.
- 3. That the want of opportunities of glorifying God is very grievous to a Godly man when he is under Affliction.

4. That it aggravates his Affliction, when by reason of his Suffering, Reproach is likely to be cast upon

God.

5. The Groans and Tears and Disquietness of an Holy person are as well or more for his Sins, then his

Sufferings.

6. In such sense of Misery or Sin, the pious Penitent bemoans himself to God, confesses, bewails his Sins, humbles himself before him, deprecates his Wrath, and earnestly seeks by Prayer and Supplication for Forgiveness of Sin, Healing, and Peace from God.

I shall consider each of these as they are placed.

#### I. PROPOSITION.

That when God visits for Sin, the Pain is extreme and intolerable.

Be it Sickness, Exile, Restraint, or whatever other Affliction the Almighty brings a man's Sin to remembrance by, it will fetch Groans and Sighs from his Breast; Tears, Rivers of tears, from his Eye. The Anguish Anguish, the Venome of his Indignation will drink up his Spirits. Though (as Solomon saith, Prov. 14.9.) Fools make a mock of Sin: It is a sport to a fool to doe mischief: (Prov. 10. 23.) yet the conclusion will be, when God visits for it, Indignation and Wrath to them that are contentius, and obey not the Truth: Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. 2.8, 9. When Abner and his men, and Joab and his men, met by the Pool of Gibeon, Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us: but when they had a while been at the sport, Abner calls to Joab, and says, Shall the Sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be Bitterness in the latter end?

2 Sam. 2. 14, 26.

A man never thrives by Sin: he may for a while be in great Power, flourish like a green Bay-tree; but in the conclusion Terrours take hold on him as waters, a Tempest stealeth him away in the night, saith Job, 27. 20. The lips of a strange woman drop as an hony-comb, and her mouth is smoother then oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, Prov. 5. 3, 4. Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is plea-Sant, Prov. 9. 17. But after the mouth is filled with gravell, Prov. 20. 17. Though Wickedness be sweet in a man's mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, as men use to doe, who would keep the tast of Sweet-meats long with them; Tet his meat within him is turned into the Gall of Asps. He hath swallowed down Riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his Belly, faith Zophar, Job 20. 12, 14.15. The whole Books of the Proverbs and Job, yea and the whole Bible, are so full of such expressions, as that a man scarce reads a Chapter, but something or other occurrs to this purpose: yea all forts of Writers, sacred and profane, have left upon record their Observations concerning the

the attendance of Punishment upon Sin; the lying of Sin at the door, when Evil is done within; the avenging Eye of God; the Terrours that are subsequent, when Conscience is awakened; the secret and silent Lashes and Tortures of a guilty Conscience, when Affliction, Trouble, the apprehension of Death or God's Anger feize on the spirit of a man. We need not instance in Cain, Saul, Judas, Felix, and such like, which the Scripture mentions; nor fuch as Nero, Caligula, and others, of whom the Roman and Greek Historians speak; nor of Spira, and others of later Times: The Confessions of David, the Complaints of 70b, the Lamentations of Feremiah, yield us pregnant

proofs of this Truth.

Besides the forealleged Texts, David tells us, Psal. 32.3, 4, 5. that when he kept silence, his bones waxed old, through his Roaring all the day long. For day and night the Hand of God was heavy on him; his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer; till he acknowledged bis Sin. Pfal. 31. 10. My strength faileth because of mine Iniquity. Pfal. 38.8. that he was feeble and fore smitten, that he roured by reuson of the disquietness of his heart. Job speaks thus to God, Job 13.26. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me 'to possess the Sins of my youth. And Jeremy, Lament. 1. 14. The yoke of my Transgressions is bound by his hand, they are wreathed and come up upon my neck: he bath made my strength to fall: and vers. 20. Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress; my bowels are troubled, mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled.

This Anguish from the sense of Sin ariseth.

1. From the nature of Sin, which is really mischievous, though feemingly pleafant. Sin is of a Serpentine kind; it hath a smooth Skin but a venomous Tail. The sting of Death (faith S. Panl) is Sin, 1 Cor. 15.56. It is a Sting,

none.

and that deadly, though it be hidden. What Solomon faith of the Drunkard's Cup, Prov. 23. 31,32. though when the wine is red in the Glass, giveth its colour in the Cup, and moveth it self aright, it is very delightfull; yet at last it will bite like a Serpent, and sting like an Adder; is true of every Sin. There is a deceitfulness of Sin, which hardens men in the committing of it, Heb. 3.13. Men are fearless and secure while the pleasure of Sin beguiles them; the consequent upon it is hidden from them: they discern not God's Eye to be on them: they delude their Souls with blasphemous imaginations, as if he saw it not, had forgotten it, were such an one as themselves. But it is otherwise: when he sets their Sins in order before them, rouzes up their fleepy Consciences, causeth their Iniquities to stare in their faces; then they find that there is a Sting in Sin; the sweet drink which they swallowed down pleasantly, gnaws and frets their bowels, torments and corrodes their fpirits, so that they figh and groan, and are ready to destroy themselves to be rid of that Venome which they so easily and greedily drank down before.

2. From the Properties of God ariseth the Dolour

that is confequent on Sin.

1. The Omniscience of God, which discerns all the most hidden ways of man: which caused 70b to say, Chap. 31. 3, 4. Is not destruction to the wicked, and strange punishment to the workers of Iniquity? Doth not be see my ways, and count all my steps? We are foolishly apt to imagine, that God fees not through the thick Clouds, that he hath forgotten, that he regards not what we doe: and thus we befool our felves with fuch devices as in the end ruine us. We are like that Bird, that puts its head in a hole, as if thereby it were fafe from the Fowler: like Children, we wink our felves, and think none fees us, because we fee C 2

none. A deceived Heart thus turns us aside, that we cannot say, Is there not a Lie in my right hand? Quod nimis miseri volunt, hoc facile credunt. But what saith the Psalmist? Psal. 44. 20, 21. If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hand to a strange God; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. Hence doth Moses derive the Affliction of Israel in the Wilderness, Psal. 90. 7, 8. We are consumed by thine Anger, and by thy Wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, our secret Sins in the light of thy Countenance.

2. The Purity of God makes God to hate Sin, and so not to tolerate it. Thou art of purer eyes, (saith the Prophet Habakkuk, 1.13.) then to behold Evil, and canst not look on Iniquity. Though he sees it, yet he will not see it: he knows it, and looks on it, yet turns away his face from it; as we doe, when we fee some noisome unclean thing, which we cause to be removed out of our fight. And this must needs create Trouble. As when the Sun shines not on the world, Clouds and Darkness and Tempests quickly overspread the Heavens: so when God hides his Face, Sorrow and Anguish of spirit take hold on mens Souls. Odium est Appetitus amovendi; Hatred is a defire of removing of that which we hate from us. I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me, (faith David, Psal. 101. 3.) It is much more true of God. Pfal. 5. 4, 5, 6. Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in Wickedness, neither shall Evil dwell with thee. The Foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of Iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing. God's Holiness moves him to inflict Anguish on men for Sin.

3. So doth also his Truth. He hath given us a Law, and hath senced it with many Threatnings, that it might



might not be broken. He is true in his Threatnings as well as in his Promises: as he is engaged to make good the one, so to verify the other. We are sure (faith the Apostle, Rom. 2. 2.) that the Judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things : and again, Rom. 3. 4. Let God be true, but every man a Liar; as it is written. That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged, or dost judge. God forceth the Tews to acknowledge this, when he puts the question to them, Your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets do they live for ever? But my words and my Statutes, which I commanded my servants the Prophets, did they not take hold of your Fathers? They returned and said, Like as the Lord of Hoasts thought to doe unto us. according to our ways and according to our doings, fo

bath he dealt with us, Zech. 1. 5, 6.

4. The Justice of God, as well as the Veracity of God, engageth God to inflict Anguish on men for Sin. His eyes are upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give to them according to their ways, and according to the fruit of their doings, Jer. 32. 19. He is the Judge of all the World, and therefore must needs doe right; as Abraham pleaded Gen. 18. 25. That be far from thee, that the Righteous should be as the Wicked. So in like manner we may fay, That be far from God, that the Wicked should be as the Righteous. Yea, God complains, Mal. 2. 17. thus, You have wearied the Lord with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the fight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of Judgment ? And again, Mal. 3. 13. Your words . have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? He tells them, verf. 15. Te call the proud happy: yea, they that work C3 Wicked-WickedWickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. See how God counts himself blasphemed, when he is charged to favour Evil men, by not executing Justice on them. Justitia est perpetua & constans voluntas suum cuique tribuendi, saith Justinian in the beginning of his Institutions; ) Justice is a perpetual and constant will of giving to every one his own. And fure, as Praise is due to them that doe well; so Vengeance to him that doeth evil. As Powers be ordained of God in his Ministers to reward well-doing with praise; and to be revengers for wrath upon him that doeth evil, Rom. 13. 4. fo God (whose Deputies they are, and bear his name,) will render to every man according to his

works.

5. It is from the Power of God that such Anguish befalls men for Sin, as I have afferted. He is great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked, faith the Prophet Nahum, 1. 3. Moses therefore, having bewailed the great Devastation of mankind by God's Anger. that carries them away as with a Floud, breaks out into these words, Psal. 90. 11. Who knoweth the power of thy Anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy Wrath. Whereby he plainly intimates, that the Power of God makes God's rebukes for Sin extreme and intolerable. 1. Because they reach to all parts of a man. He can punish Soul and Body, yea and cast both into Hell-fire, Matth. 10.28. 2. He can make all or any of the Creatures his Instruments of Punishment; he can arm the least Worm for Vengeance: yea and that which makes it most unsupportable, he can make a man's own Spirit his Sword to wound him; and this is of all the forest; it being true which Solomon faith, Prov. 18. 14. The Spirit of a man will suffain his Infirmity: but a wounded spirit who can bear? 3. There is no way to escape from it, or to avoid the Affliction he will bring on a person;

there being neither hiding-place where he cannot find a man, nor remote place whither his hand cannot reach, nor any auxiliary power to match or withstand him, nor any Remedy but by him. Qui vulnera fecit, Solus Achilléo tollere more potest. Which brings in the Second Observation.

### II. PROPOSITION

That Beds and Couches and other bodily Refections little avail to ease a Conscience or a Person that is oppres-

fed with the weight of God's Stroke for Sin.

This fob found, 7.13,14,15. When I fay, My Bed shall comfort me, my Couch shall ease my Complaint; Then thou scarest me with Dreams, and terrifiest me through Visions: So that my Soul chufeth strungling, and death rather then life. And the like we may fay of any other Creaturehelp. All the Artists, Oratours, Divines, Angels, and whatever there is in the Universe to cure or alleviate an afflicted Spirit, are no more able to redress its Malady, without God, then the old World was to stay the univerfal Deluge; or Sodom to prevent its Burning with fire and brimftone from heaven. It is God's Prerogative to kill, and to make alive; to bring down to the Grave, and to bring up; to raise the Fiend of an awakened Conscience, and to lay it again. He that made the Spirit can by the Spirit and his Son's Bloud quiet and purge the Conscience from dead works, to serve the living God, and he alone.

## APPLICATION

To apply this then to your use.

1. It should deterre you from sinning against God. Though Sin may smile upon you before you commit

it, it will bite you when you have acted it. It may fing you a fair pleasant Song, like a Siren; but it will destroy you, if it entice you thereby. S. James tells you the true brood of Sin, 1. 14, 15. Every man is tempted, &c. Though the Pleasures of Sin be delightfull. yet they are poisonous. Quisquamne Venenum vult in Auro? Will any man venture to drink Poison in a golden Cup? You that are given to drink excessively. confider while the Cup is at your mouth, that there will be a Cup of Wrath given you to drink, the Venome whereof will fet your Bones on fire, and drink up your Spirits. You that are given to unclean and unlawfull Lusts of the body, if you be not afraid of the Morbus Gallicus, yet fear the Wrath of him who will judge fuch persons, and burn you with a more unquenchable Fire then that which confumed Sodom and Gomorrah. You that so love the Mammon of Iniquity, that you serve it; that regard not how you get Wealth, per fas, per nefas, by right or wrong, Rem, Rem, quocunque modo Rem, Money any way, though by Sacriledge, publick Robbery, Grinding the face of the Poor, by Bribery, Extortion, Perjury, Over-reaching in bargaining, Defrauding, Theft, or any other way; think of Zechariah's flying Roll, the Curfe, Zech. 5.4. which God will bring forth, and it shall enter into the house of the Thief, and into the house of him that Sweareth falsely by his Name; and it shall remain in his house, to cut off or torture the Inhabitant, and to consume the Materials of the house. You that are profane Scoffers, that deride the Word and Service of God; or close Hypocrites, that counterfeit Godliness; know that God will not be mocked, and cannot be refifted. Let me fay to you, or any other Sinner who goes on in any finfull way, insensible of the Sting which is in the Tail; the Terrours of Conscience, and Wrath of God.

God, these will surely overtake him, without Repentance: yea and if he do repent, will in some measure bring Anguish and Pain to him. And as the Apostle saith to the Corinthians, I Cor. 10. 22. Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousse? are we stronger then he? If we be, sin and spare not: if not, consider the evil that will follow, all ye that forget God; lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, Psal. 50. 22.

2. If you have finned, think not to wear out by time the impression Sin makes on thy Conscience; nor to extinguish the sense of Sin, by Drinking, merry Company, carnal Pleasure, vain Mirth, Musick; or to lay it afleep by Formality in Religion, Popes Pardons, Priests Absolutions, without true Repentance and Faith in Christ. All these are Physicians of no value, Forgers of Lies, as Job speaks, 13. 4. Doe rather as Job did, 42. 5, 6. fay to God, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; now mine eye feeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes. Humble thy self under his hand: pray to him not to rebuke thee in Anger, nor chasten thee in his hot Displeasure; but to have mercy on thee, and heal thy Soul that hath sinned against him. Bring with thee penitential Groans and medicinal Tears of that Sorrow which is according to God, working Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of : and with it Faith in the blond of Christ, which cleanseth from all Sin. And if thou come to God in' this manner, doubt not but God will perform to thee what he saith, Isa. 57. 18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore Comfort unto him and to his mourners. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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# DAVID'S GROANS.

Part II.

# The Second SERMON.

PSALM Vi. 6.

I am weary of my Groaning: every night wash I my Bed, and water my Couch with my Tears.

HIS Psalm, or Poem de Tristibus, is intituled to David, and contains an holy Elegy or mournfull Complaint to God concerning his present Affliction, whether Sickness, or Exile, or whatever other Grievance he was under: the effect whereof was,

1. Groans, and those usque ad lassitudinem, deep continued Groans, which shewed much Anguish of spirit he was under; I am weary with my Groaning.

2. Tears, a fign of Grief; and those not a few, not like a small Mist or Dew, that a little moistens; but as a great showr of Rain, that makes a Floud, so as to make his Bed to swim, and to water his Conch. And these too continued night and day, yea all the night, or every night and every day, (it's likely) for the time: and that so as to disappoint him of the benefit of his Bed for Rest in the night, and of his Conch for Ease in the day.

The

The Causes of which sad estate are intimated: vers. his sear of being deprived of the opportunity of remembring God, and giving him thanks among the living; the insulting of his Enemies, vers. 7, 10. and especially their Reproaching his Assiance in his God; and, by collation with the like Complaints in other Psalms, the Remembrance of his own Sins, which made, as his present Assistance of his own Sins, which made, as his present Assistance or Propositions, vers. 8. Whence these six Conclusions or Propositions have been deduced, and the two first already handled.

1. That when God's hand is on any for Sin, it is

beavy and intolerable.

2. Beds and Couches give not Ease, when God brings Sin to remembrance.

Of these I shall say no more.

3. The want of opportunity of glorifying God is very grievous to a person that is Godly, when he is under Affliction.

4. That it aggravates his Affliction, when by reason of his Suffering, Reproach is likely to be cast on God.

5. The Groans, Tears and Disquietness of an Holy person under his Affliction are as well or more for his

Sins, then his Sufferings.

6. In such sense of Misery or Sin, the pious Penitent bemoans himself to God, confesseth, bewaileth his Sin, humbleth himself before him, deprecateth his Wrath, and earnestly seeketh by Prayer and Supplication for Forgiveness of Sin, Healing, and Peace from God.

#### III. PROPOSITION.

That the want of opportunity of glorifying God, by praifing of him, by commemorating his Goodness, exciting of and joyning with others in the celebrating his Praise, is very grievous to a person that is Godly, and addes to his Affliction by Sickness, or Exile, or other Restraint which he is under.

This was one Reason of David's Tears and Groans here. And to like purpose he argues with God, P(al. 30. 9. when He hid his face, and himself was troubled; What profit is there in my bloud, when I go down to the Pit? shall the Dust praise thee? shall it declare thy Truth? And Hezekiah in his Sickness bemoans his Condition thus, Isa. 38. 10, 11. I am deprived of the residue of my years: I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living. Vers. 18. he gives the Reason. why he had great bitterness for peace; For the Grave cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee : they that go down into the Pit cannot bope for thy Truth. vers. 19. The Living, the Living, he shall praise thee. In his plea before Saul, David makes this his greatest Grievance by reason of Saul's Persecution, that he was driven from abiding in the Inheritance of the Lord, I Sam. 26. 19. Psal. 84. 1, 2. he expresseth his Affection thus; How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of hoasts? My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my Heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. And as preferring the condition of the Birds before his present condition in his Exile, he thus bespeaks God, vers. 2. Yea, the Sparrow hath found a house, and the Swallow a nest for her self, where she may lay her young; even thine Altars, O Lord of hoasts, my King and my God: and then adds, vers. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy House: they will still be praising thee; and vers. 10. For a day in thy Courts is better then a thousand. I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, then to dwell in the Tents of wickedness. No Society, no Habitation, no Fare, no Pleasure, could content David, while he was deprived of the Society

of them that praised God, was kept from the Worship of God at his Tabernacle, debarr'd from access to God, to enquire of him what he was to doe, and to address his Supplications to God in his House of Prayer. And

the Reasons hereof are,

1. From the Property of an Holy person, which is, to delight in Communion with God, so as to make God his Joy chiefly, yea, in some fort solely: that is, though he can rejoyce in Wife, Children, Food, and other Bleffings he hath; yet he cannot, he dares not terminate his Joys in them, but he rejoyceth in them as the gift of God, Eccles. 5. 18, 19. He eats his bread with joy, and drinks his wine with a merry heart; for God accepteth his works, Eccles. 9.7. He rejoyceth in them, because he hath them with God's allowance. with his favour; they are sanctified to him by the word of God and prayer, and thereby they are good to him, I Tim.4.4,5. otherwise they would be unclean to him, Tit. 1.15. All things are good to the Godly with the light of God's Countenance, if they can have them with his acceptance, and use them for his Glory. God is the principal thing in which a renewed Nature delights: all other things are pleasant as they come from him, and tend to him; as they fignify to us his good will towards us, and as they are occasions of shewing our love to him. Trabit sna quemque voluptas. carnall hearts have carnall delights; so a spirituall perfon delights in the things of the Spirit of God, Rom. 8.5. A Sow will feed on filth, a Sheep on tender sweet grafs: So profane and ungodly men can be merry in a Tavern, in Swearing, Curling, Singing obscene Songs, and Invectives against Piety, praising of God, hearing his Word; but a Holy heart is weary of fuch Company, it is a Hell to him to affociate with fuch. me, faith David, (Pfal. 120. 5.) that I sojourn in Mefech.

fech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: but, faith he, Pfal. 122. 1, 2. I was glad when they faid unto me, Let us goe into the House of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy Gates, O Jerusalem: for there God is praifed, there is an Affembly of them that love God, and delight in his Worship. Truly, saith S. John, (1 John 1.3.) our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son fesus Christ. As it is the greatest Grievance for an Epicure, a swinish, brutish, voluptuous, luxurious man, to be restrained from his Cups, wanton and sensual Company and Delights: so it is the greatest Grievance to good men, to be withheld from the Communion and Society of Saints, from the enjoyment of holy Ordinances, and imployment in holy Exercises, whereby they may honour and injoy Communion with God; because they delight in God, and count all other delight as infipid, without relish, while they want that Intercourse with God which makes all things favoury and pleafant to them.

2. The End of a Godly man's life is to honour God, and to promote the Service and Kingdome of Jesus Christ. None of us (faith the Apostle, Rom. 14.7, 8.) liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Without God a Godly man's Life is not Vita vitalis, a lively Life, but rather a Dream then a Life: He doth sensim mori, he doth but linger, and die a lingering death. This, saith the Apostle, (Phil. 1.20, 21.) is my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. That is, the whole gain of his life or death was Christ: and therefore so he might glorify

glorify him, and enjoy him, he was indifferent whether he did live or die. He was affected so to Christ and his love to him, that in his farewell speech to the Ephesian Elders, Act. 20. 22, 23, 24. he saith, And now behold, I goe bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might sinish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospell of the

grace of God.

It is the property of Love, not to feek its own things, 1 Cor. 13. 5. but the pleafing and ferving him whom he loves, and accordingly to that he loves; he regards nothing so much as the gratifying of his beloved, is willing to part with any thing which may be incon-fiftent therewith, imploys his faculties to the utmost, acts ad extremum virium, to the uttermost, on his behalf. Love is Affect us Unionis, an Affection of Union: the Soul of a Lover is ubi amat, non ubi animat, not where he breaths, but where he loves; which makes him long after his beloved, as David did, Pfal. 42. 1, 2. As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, So panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? And for the same reason he is not content in Exile or Sickness, when he cannot have op-portunity to glorify God. As, on the other side, it is well with him, when he can injoy God, and doe his work, though it be with shipwreck of all his other Commodities: he willingly parts with all, and freely relinquisheth them, for this end; as knowing that of our Saviour to be a necessary Lesson to be learned by him, He that loveth Father or Mother more then me, is not worthy

from

worthy of me: and he that loveth Son or Daughter more then me, is not worthy of me, Matth. 10. 37. and again, Luk. 14. 26. If any man come unto me, and bate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brothers, and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. Excellent and worthy was the resolution of S. Paul, Act. 21. 13. When he was befought not to goe up to Terusalem, because of Agabus his Prophecy of his being bound at Terusalem, and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles; he thus repells the motion of his most loving Friends, What mean ye to weep and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound onely, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus. But far more excellent was the Objurgation of Christ to S. Peter, to whom ( when he disfluaded him from going up to Jerusalem, to suffer death there) with indignation he turns himself with this Thunder-clap, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men, Matth. 16.23.

And indeed, though in a far inferiour degree, fuch is the mind of all that truly love God and the Lord Tefus Christ; They are magnanimously resolved to encounter with all Difficulties for Their honour; (as Lather, who would goe to Wormes to witness his Doctrine before the Emperour, though he should meet with as many Devils there as there were Tiles on the houses of that City; ) and are well contented when they part with the greatest outward Advantages for it. As those Martyrs that went to the Stake joyfully; and that Marquess that left the Emperour's Court, and Preferment there, his Wife and Children, to injoy the Gospell in a Protestant City. And they think their Life not to be regarded but for the use of it in God's Service. As that learned Doctour, who being distinated

from studying so much, whereby his Life was likely to be shortned, and told, that it was not wisedom perdere Substantiam propter Accidentia, to lose Substance for Accidents, meaning Life for encrease of Learning, and communicating it by writing, answered, Nec propter Vitam vivendi perdere Causas, that it was as unfit for him to take care of his Health, and to lose the Use and End of his Life, which was the doing his work, glorifying of God, and benefitting of others. (Doctour Reynolds.) Then a Holy man lives with Comfort, when he can honour God, and doe his work: but when he is stopped therein, then he is meary with Groaning, and waters his Couch with his Tears; as David did here for his present Affliction, because it hindred him from the Assemblies, wherein he might remember and thank God: as also because he feared the insolent Pride of his Enemies, that they would reproach God. Which leads us to the

#### IV. PROPOSITION.

That it aggravates a Godly man's Affliction, when by reason of his Sufferings, Reproach is likely to be cast

upon God.

That the fense of this was that which so much disquieted David when he penned this Pfalm, and caufed the mournful Groans and Tears here mentioned, may be gathered from the next verse, where he saith, Mine eye is consumed because of Grief, it maxeth old because of all mine Enemies: and vers. 10. Let all mine Enemies be ashamed and sore vexed; let them return and be ashamed suddenly. Now the Reason why his Enemies were fuch a thorn in his fide, when he was in Sickness or Exile, (in one of which it is likely this Psalm was penned,) is expressed Pfal. 42. 9, 10. thus, I will fay unto God,

My Rock, why hast thou forgotten me? why goe I mourning because of the oppression of the Enemy? As with a (word in my bones, mine Enemies reproach me, while they far daily unto me, Where is thy God? God had fent Samuel to anoint him King over Israel, he had promised to establish the Kingdome in his House, and to subdue all his Enemies on every side: of this he much gloried. even then when he fled to the Philistines, and changed his behaviour before them; and his Enemies in Saul's Court, or the Philistines, insulted over him, as if his hopes were at an end, God had cast him off, and would be favourable no more, had forgotten to be gracious, and did fail in his promise, Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9. yet even then (as the Title of the Pfalm imports, Pfal. 34. 1, 2.) he refolved thus, I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be continually in my mouth. My Soul shall make her boast in the Lord. With this his Considence in God they were wont to upbraid him, when he was low, in some Sickness, or in a flitting Condition, or driven from fernsalem by his Son Absalom: as Psal. 3. 1, 2. he complains, Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise up against me. Many there be that say of my Soul, There is no help for him in his God. So when Shimei railed on him and curfed him, 2 Sam. 16. 7, 8. The like may be gathered from passages in many other Pfalms; as Pfal. 7. concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite; Doeg the Edomite, Pfal. 52. and others. By which it may be perceived, that in his low estate David was more sensible of the Injury which might be to God's Name, then his own Calamity. Psal. 22.7, 8. among other things wherein (whether in respect of his own Condition, or prophetically describing the Anguish of our Lord Christ's Soul when he suffered for us, of which that Pfalm is a manifest Prediction,) David sets out his deplorable estate, he urgeth

urgeth thus, that all that Cam him laughed him to Corn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. Which being the thing done to Christ, Matth. 27. 43. and Christ ufing the first words of that Psalm, Matth. 27.46. on the Cross, it is evident that as to David in the Type, so to Christ in the Antitype, this was one of the greatest Vexations to them in their Sufferings, that they were twitted with and scoffingly taunted for their Trust in God. as if it were a vain thing to call upon God, and to trust upon him. And indeed the Apostle tells us, Rom. 15.2. that herein Christ pleased not himself, but it was an addition to the heavy Sufferings which he underwent, that the Reproaches of them that reproached God fell on him. When Hezekiah heard of Sennacherib's message. in which he magnified himself, and vilified the God of Israel, it is said that he rent his cloaths, and covered himself with Suckcloath, and went to the House of the Lord, and sent to Isaiah this message, This day is a day of Trouble, and of Rebuke, and of Blasphemy. It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh. whom the King of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God: thereby shewing what he laid most to heart, that the living God should be reproached. When, by reason of the Sin of Achan, the men of Israel were smitten by the men of Ai, Joshua rent his cloaths, and fell to the earth upon his face, before the Ark of the Lord, untill the even-tide, he and the Elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads: and he prayed, O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their Enemies? For the Canaanites and all the Inhabitants of the Land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou doe unto thy great Name ? Josh. 7. 6, 8,9. Wherein you may

may perceive, that the Sore which most of all vexed the spirit of Toshua and the Elders of Israel, which made them to put on the habit of Mourners, was the Difparagement likely to befall the great Name of God, if the Canaanites did prevail. In like manner Moles. when he interceded for the Israelites, who had provoked God to destroy them by their Idolatry and their Murmuring, useth this Argument, of the Injury that would accrue to his great Name, if he did not spare them; preferring God's Honour before his own Advancement or Happines: Exod. 32. 11, 12. Num. 14. 13. &c. Yea, the Dishonour done to God in making the Golden Calf did so incense Moses, that he broke the Tables of the Decalogue, and burnt the Calf, made them drink the powder of it, and fet the Levites armed to kill the Idolaters. Memorable also was the carriage of Barnabas and Paul, Act. 14. 14. When the people of Lystra magnified them as Gods for the healing of an impotent man, and would have facrificed unto them, as to Jupiter and Mercurius, they rent their cloaths, and ran in among the people, crying out, Sirs, why doe you these things? We are men; turn to the living God: though they were in jeopardy of being stoned by them. This is indeed the conftant disposition of all uprighthearted men, that they had rather fuffer any Indignities. Injuries, Dammages, Calamities, themselves, then have God's Glory and Honour be eclipfed: they are willing that any Crime, Shame, Falshood, should be imputed to them, rather then the least Ignominy or Disgrace cast on God; that their Names should become odious, then God's have the least blemish. And the Reasons are.

1. Because they esteem themselves as nothing in comparison of God; and therefore count it a small matter, what Evil befalls them, so that God be magnified. When Abraham bespeaks God, he useth this

felf-debasing preface, Gen. 18. 27. Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: And Jacob, Gen. 32. 10. I am not worthy of, or, as it is in the Hebrew, I am less then the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant: And Job, 40. 4. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth; Chap. 42. 5, 6. Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor my self: And David, I Chron. 17. 16. Who am I, O Lord, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? I Chron. 29. 14, 15. Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our Fathers: our days on the earth

are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

On the other fide hey ascribe all Greatness unto God. Moses in his Song, Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearfull in praises, doing wonders? Deut. 32. 3, 4. Because I will publish the Name of the Lord; ascribe ye Greatness to our God. He is the Rock. his work is perfect; for all his ways are Judgment: a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is He. Pfal. 145. 1, 2, 3. faith David, I will extell thee, my God and my King, and I will bless thy Name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his Greatness is unsearchable. The four living Creatures rest not day and night, Saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. They give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the Throne, who liveth for ever. And the four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sate on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever; and cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying,

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created, Rev. 4. 8, 9, 10, 11. Many more such expressions there are in the Songs of Hannah, the blessed Virgin, the 14000 Virgins, and other Hymns of the Saints in the Old and New Testament, which do fully shew, that this is the constant disposition of all Holy hearts, to nullify all their Excellency, when it is compared with God; and to extoll the Name of God as infinitely exceeding all created Beings: and therefore they conceive it most equall, that they should count the Disparagement of God as a more heavy Affliction then their own Suf-

ferings.

2. They know that God's Name is most tenderly regarded by him. Num. 14. 21. the Lord faid, Truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord. Deut. 32. 26, 27. I faid, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; Were it not that I feared the wrath of the Enemy, lest their Adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and say, Our hand is high, and the Lord bath not done all this. Ifa. 42.8. I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, neither my Praise to graven Images. Isa. 48. 11. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I doe it; for how should my Name be polluted? and I will not give my Glory to another. Ezek. 20. 9. But I wrought for my Name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the Heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made my felf known unto them. In the Third Commandment, Exod. 20. 7. God chargeth, Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain. And therefore the Godly are sensible of his Glory above their own

own Peace; and more affected with any dirt cast on God's face, then any wound given to their own perfons.

3. They know it is the Duty of all created Beings. to prefer their Maker, their Father, their King and Lord, before themselves. They know they are engaged to fear this glorious and fearfull Name, The Lord their God, Deut. 28. 58. as the Father that begat them, the Rock that formed them, Deut. 32. 6, 15, 18. When S. John would have worshipped the Angel, he forbade him, See thou doe it not; for I am thy fellow-fervant, and of thy brethren, the Prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God, Rev. 22.9. As David's people counted their King (as all good Subjects do) worth ten thousand of themselves, 2 Sam. 18. 3. and all honest Servants count their Master's Wel-fare and Credit far before their own, yea his Life before their own: so do all Holy persons God's Glory, as being their Master, their Father, their King. Cræsus his Son, that never spake before, opened then his mouth, and faid, Kill not King Creefus, when a Souldier was about to flay him. So will every Child of God be moved, when his heavenly Father is blafphemed, and his Name stricken through; though he be filent when himself is abused. Christ bids us pray, Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, before he directs us to pray, Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our debts. The Relation of Creatures, Children, Subjects and Servants to God. oblige every Holy person to mind and seek the fanctifying of God's Name, though it be with never so great diminution and detriment to himself.

4. And lastly, They know that thus doing, they shall best provide for themselves. When David was little in his own eyes, God chose him to be head of his

people Israel. He knew it to be true which God said to Eli, 1 Sam. 2.30. Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. As all Princes of worth will reward their loyal Subjects, all good Parents their dutifull Children, all wise Masters their obedient Servants: so God will doe to all his true-hearted Subjects, Children, and Servants. And this makes them regardless of themselves in comparison of God, as knowing, that they best provide for themselves, when they are careless of their own Estates, but most carefull of his Glory.

### APPLICATION.

1. We may hereby judge of what spirit they are. who neither in Sickness nor Health, Adversity nor Prosperity, are affected with the Worship of God. with the Dishonour or Honour that is done to his Name. Sure they have not the Heart of David, who greaned unto weariness, all the night made his Bed to frim, and watered his Couch with his Tears, because he wanted the opportunity of remembring God, of giving him thanks in his Sanctuary, by reason of his Sickness or Exile: in which he was most afraid lest his Enemies should be highly injurious to God, in speaking evil of him; was less sensible of his own Suffering. They who, well or ill, mind not to repair to the Affemblies to praise God; that are no whit moved by the taking of God's Name in vain, or the blaspheming of him, if so be they may be quiet, live at ease, in wealth, in content. They are undoubtedly of a Devillish spirit, that are enemies to the praising of God, that inveigh against and oppose the solemn Service and Worship, in holy Prayer, Praises of God, Preaching and Hearing of his most holy Word; that deride those

those things, and deterre men from them. Much more damnable is their practice who glory in the profaning of the glorious Name of the Almighty God; who make it their sport and their gallantry to abuse the High and Holy one in vain and false Swearing, in direfull Blasphemies and Curses, in impious Atheistical Jests and Scoffs: which I wish were onely outlandish behaviour, that could, as heretofore, be charged onely on Italianated, Hispaniolized Papists; that it were not the fashion of English Protestants, who seem often to pray, Hallowed be thy Name, and when the Commandments of the First Table are read, to say, Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep these Laws; yet neither have God for their God, nor regard his Worship, nor hallow his Name, nor fanctifie his Day, but pollute all with their impure Tongues and foul Feet. Oh that you that are guilty of so doing would tremble at the Damnation due to these Sins; and you who are not guilty would mourn for these Abominations in others, and be affected as David was, Pfal. 119. 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law.

2. If God bring Sickness or any other Affliction upon you, let this be a Grievance to you, that you cannot be with them that are imployed in God's Worship: when you are in Health, at Liberty, in Peace, omit not to wait on God in his solemn Service. Consider how unworthy a thing it is, to mind your own things, as if you owed nothing to God, from whom you have All: to forget that He is your Maker, the Father that begat you, your King, your Lord, your God, who is good, kind, and mercifull to you. Let the thoughts of God be dear to you, his Name precious. Be affected like David, who could not be contented to dwell in a bouse of Cedar, when the Ark of God dwelt with-

within Curtains, 2 Sam. 7. 2. Be willing to further God's Honour, and the Knowledge of him, more then to furnish your own Houses, adorn your own Backs, and make provision for your own Tables. Let them be your best Friends that glorifie God most; and those your Enemies, that take his Name in vain. And let your Sighs and Tears be as much for neglecting God's Service, as for omitting the pursuance of your own Ends, your own Preferments, Pleasures, Profits. In a word, where you can, endeavour to recover such from their Profaneness and Ungodliness, who mind not his Worship, or pollute his Name by any profane speeches or behaviour: pluck them as Brands out of the fire. with holy zeal for God, and compassion to them. And if you cannot amend them, yet mourn for them, (as Samuel did for Sanl, when God was departed from him, I Sam. 15. 35.) And for your selves, take heed of suffering as Evil-doers, but be not ashamed to suffer as Christians, but glorifie God therein. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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# DAVID'S GROANS.

Part III.

### The Third SERMON.

PSALM vi. 6.

I am weary of my Groaning: every night wash I my Bed, and water my Couch with my Tears.

being made of the Cause of such excessive Grief as is here expressed; it hath been resolved; That not onely Pain of Body, or Bodily Restraint, drew out such Groans, such a Fountain of Tears as was let out when this Psalm was made: Privation of God's Worship, sear of the Dishonour that might accrue to God from his Enemies, Reproaching God by reason of him, are intimated vers. 5, 7, 10. to have been likewise Causes of this immoderate Sorrow. And accordingly I have already handled these four Points.

1. That when God's hand is on any for Sin, it is

heavy and intolerable.

2. Beds and Couches give not Ease, when God brings Sin to remembrance.

3. The want of opportunity of glorifying God is very grievom to a person that is Godly, when he is under Affliction.

4. That it aggravates his Affliction, when by rearon of his Suffering, Reproach is likely to be cast on God.

Thus far we have proceeded. There is plus ultra,

somewhat more to be gathered from this Flower.

Commonly this Psalm is styled One, or the First of the Penitentiall Psalms. And that these Groans and Tears were for Sin, hath been gathered partly from other parallel places, Pfal. 38. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pfal. 39. 11. Pfal. 40. 12. Pfal. 41. 4. and others: from the Prayer here, vers. 1. wherein he acknowledgeth his present Affliction, Rebukes and Chastening, from God, and therefore for Sin; and vers. 8. ascribes an audible Voice to his meeping, which argues his Tears were for Sin, and with Supplication for its Pardon. And hence these Conclusions or Propositions have been deduced.

5. That Affliction brings Sin to Remembrance; and that the Groans and Tears and Disquietness of an Holy person under his Affliction are as well or more for his

Sins, then for his Sufferings.

6. In such sense of Misery or Sin, the pious Penitent person bemoaneth himself to God, confesseth, bewaileth his Sin, humbleth himself before him, deprecateth his Wrath, and earnestly seeketh by Prayer and Supplication for Forgiveness of Sin, Healing, and Peace from God.

And of these (with Divine assistance) I shall now

speak.

#### V. PROPOSITION.

That Affliction brings Sin to Remembrance; and that the Groans and Tears and Disquietness of an Holy person under his Affliction are as well or more for his Sins, then for his Sufferings.

I. That

1. That Affliction brings Sin to Remembrance, is manifelt by many Instances. When the Sons of Jacob were in streights by reason of Toseph's seeming rough dealing with them in Egypt, and his imprisoning one of them; then they remembred their Sin, which it feems they minded not before: Gen. 42.21. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. When Adonibezek was caught, and his Thumbs and great Toes cut off, he could then remember. Threescore and ten Kings, having their Thumbs and great Toes cut off, gathered their meat under my Table: as I have done, God hath requited me, Jos. 1. 7. The Widow of Sarepta that entertained Elijah the Prophet. when her Son was dead, expressed her self in a fit of passion to Elijah, What have I to doe with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my Sin to remembrance, and to flay my Son? 1 King. 17. 18. Even holy Job, though an upright and perfect man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, yet in the time of his Affliction complains, that God did write bitter things against kim, and made him to possess the Iniquities of his youth, Job 13. 26. When Manasseh was bound in fetters, and carried to Babylon, then he humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, 2 Chron. 33. 11, 12. When Terusalem, that slighted the many Warnings of the Prophets that were sent to her, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people carried captive to Babylon, then they could remember that they had grievously sinned, and therefore were removed, Lament. 1. 7.8.

And indeed, this is the very End of God's Afflictions, to bring mens Sins into Remembrance. In their Profeerity men are secure, they mind their Pleasures, think

not of the Reckoning; they are like men that are filled with Wine, fast asleep, and heed not what is said of them, or to them, or what is near them, or intended to be done to them; and so are not moved at all by any Counsells or Warnings given them by God or man. When Wisedome calls, they refuse to hearken; when the firetcheth out her hands, no man regards it : their Proferity destroys them, Prov. 1. 24, 32. Yea, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to doe evil, Eccles. 8. 11. And therefore as men use to doe when a person is thus asleep, and the house is on fire, or an Enemy is coming, they jog and pinch, and, if need be, whip and scourge and beat such a drowzy person to awaken him, that he may escape the fire or the fword, that he may perceive his folly and his danger: fo doth God deal with men that fin, even the best, when they abuse their Prosperity so as to grow fecure in Sin, or to become dull and fluggish about the work God requires of them; he visits them with some Affliction or other, which may bring their Sin to mind; he bedgeth up their way with thorns, and makes a wall, that they may not find their paths, as it is Hof. 2.6. What the Lord often inculcates to us concerning our Children, he is not wanting to observe towards his own. He tells us that Foolifhness is bound in the beart of a Child; but the Rod of Correction shall drive it far from him, Prov. 22. 15. The Rod of Reproof gives wisedom; but a Child left to himself bringeth his Mother to shame, Prov. 29. 15. And therefore he often chargeth Parents to correct their Children. Correct thy Son, and he shall give thee rest; yea he shall give delight unto thy foul, Ibid. vers. 17. Chasten thy Son while there is hope; and let not thy Soul spare for his Crying, Prov. 19. 18. Yea he faith, Prov. 13.24. He that fareth his Rod bateth

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bateth his Son: but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes. And accordingly the Lord, who is wife, and knows how to handle his own Children, when he doth perceive them careless, and heedless of their Duty, fecure in their Sin, fets their Sin before them, making it legible by some Correction; that they may discern their Fault by their Punishment, and being humbled for the one, may remove the other. As many as I love, (faith Christ, ) I rebuke and chasten, Revel. 2.19. Which is no other then what the Authour of the Epistle to the Hebrews (12. 5, 6.) tells them; My Son, despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. Which is the same that Solomon had said, My Son, despise not the Chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his Correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth, Prov. 2. 11, 12. And before him Eliphaz in 70b, (5. 17.) Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the Chastening of the Almighty.

The nature of all the Afflictions which God inflicts on any is Castigation, or Vindication. It was not for any special Sin of the Child or Parents, that the man mentioned Joh. 9.2, 3. was born blind; nor that Job was under so many Calamities as we reade of, was it because of any presumptuous Sin that he was chargeable with: but that in the one the works of God might be made manifest in him; in the other, that his Sincerity might be tried, that he did not serve God for his outward Prosperity. Yet there was Sin in them, and one Use of those Visitations was to shew the Evil of Sin. All God's punitive Acts are Judgments; even his own Children are judged for Sin: though when they

are judged, they are chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world, I Cor. 11. 32. Though the Avengement or vindictive Satisfaction be laid on Christ, so as that he bears the Iniquities of his Children; yet their own Sufferings are from God's Justice, occafioned by their Sins as the impulsive cause, though not intended in Satisfaction to his Justice as the final cause. Hence it is that some are so blinded, that when the Hand of God is lifted up, they will not see, Isa. 26. 11. And some, when they have been stricken, have not grieved, when consumed, have resulted to receive Correction; have made their faces harder then a Rock, have refused to return; have been so foolist, as not to know the way of the Lord, nor the Judgment of their God, Jerem. 5. 3, 4. Yet fo much effect hath natural Conscience had even in Infidels, that it hath accused or excused them between themselves, that they have judged others; as knowing the Judgment of God, that they who do commit great enormous Crimes are worthy of death, Rom. 1.32. and 2. 1, 15. Even the barbarous people, Act. 28. 4. were so acquainted with God's avenging Justice, that when they faw a Viper on S. Paul's hand, they faid among themselves, No doubt this man is a Murtherer. whom, though he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live. And always those who have acquaintance with God become fensible of his Hand: as David, Pfal. 119. 120. faith of himself, My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments. And it moves them to be affected more with their Sin then their Sufferings, which is next to be confidered.

2. That the pious Penitent person is more afflicted by reason of his Sin, then his Sufferings; that his Groaning and Tears are from the sense of his own Displeasing God, more then from the sense of the Pain which God inflicts on him; is apparent from the Instances we

have

have of fuch Penitent persons. In David's penitential Complaints, it is his Sin that he still complains of. Pfal. 31. 10. My life is spent with grief, and my years with fighing: my strength faileth because of mine Iniquity. and my bones are consumed. Psal. 38.3, 4. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine Anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my Sins. For mine Iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me. He saith not his Pain was too heavy a Burthen for him, but his Iniquity: which is indeed so heavy a Burthen, that the Shoulders of Christ himself, the Lord of Glory, were so pressed with it, as to make him cry out, My Soul is heavy unto the death; and, My God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? Again, Psal. 40. 12. he bemoans his case, that innumerable Evils had compassed him about; his Iniquities had taken hold upon him, so that he was not able to look up: they were more then the hairs of his head, therefore his heart failed him. It was not by reason of the multitude of his Evils, but the multitude of his Iniquities, that his heart failed him.

Outward Evils reach but the outward man: Sins remembred lie heavy on the Conscience. Now, as Solomon saith, (Prov. 18.14) The spirit of a man will sustain his Instrmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? Those Philosophers that could endure the greatest Tortures of body, inflicted by cruel Tyrants, while they had would not bear the least Pain, when the Conscience of some foul Evil haunted them. A great Burthen will be born by a whole Shoulder; but the least Burthen pains intolerably when the Bone is broken, or it lies on a Sore place. A broken spirit drieth up the bones, Prov. 17. 22. My Sin, saith David, is ever before me: and that brake his Bones. Where Sin (as it is said of

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Antipheron Oretanus, that his Shadow was always before him) is still before a man, it haunteth and vexeth him as a Hornet: or, as the Poets seign of the Furies, which the Oratour interprets of a guilty Conscience, it still affrights him. Lament. 1. 14. The yoke of my Transgressions is bound by his hand. The yoke they selt, they term the yoke of their Transgressions; intimating, that by reason of their Transgressions, their Assistions were as a yoke bound by God's hand, and wreathed, and came upon their neck. And in like manner, Isa. 64. 5, 6, 7, the assisted Penitents pour out their Souls before God thus: Behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned. We all do sade as a leaf, and our Iniquities, as the wind, have taken us away. Thou hast hid thy sace from us, and

consumed us, because of our Iniquities.

Herein there lies a great difference between the Sufferings of a meer Natural man, and one Renewed or Regenerated by the Spirit of God. The one complains of his Pain, of his hard Fortune, his ill Luck; he frets and vexeth at his Disappointment; his Sighs and Groans are, that he is croft, and cannot have his will; he imputes his Misery to Chance, Stars, and the like. If he weep, as Esan, it is not for his Profaneness, but for his missing the Blessing: Heb. 12. 16, 17. His Crying and Bitterness of spirit is not to God, but Haac. Gen. 27. 34. with a murtherous mind towards Facob. vers. 42. Cain tells God, Gen. 4. 13, 14. My Punishment is greater then I can bear. Behold, thou halt driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a Firgitive and a Vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall flay me. Not a word that shewed his Repentance for his devillish act in murthering his Brother. It is otherwise with the Penitent. S. Peter goes out, and weeps bitterly, not for his his Danger, but for his Sin. The Regenerate bemoan their sinfull Corruptions, not their Sufferings. S. Paul, that could take pleasure in Afflictions and Reproaches, yet groans in his earthly Tabernacle by reason of the Sin that dwelled in him.

This indeed is the nature of true Repentance, it begetteth a Sorrow after God, fuch as produceth Carefulness, Self-clearing, Indignation, Fear, vehement Defire, Zeal. Revence; as they are faid to be in the Corinthians. 2 Cor. 7. 11. When they remember their ways and their doings, wherein they have been defiled, true Repenting persons will not inveigh against others, cry out of their Destiny, nor censure others, or impute their Evils to forrein Causes; but take shame to themselves, and loath themselves in their own light, for all their Evils that they have committed, Ezek. 20. 43. And the reafon hereof is, because it is their Sin which is indeed their Evil. It is that which is simply Evil; their Affliction is but Malum secundum quid, Evil in some respect. Evil that hath something of Good in it, and which tends to some Good; not onely to God's Glory and others Warning, but also to his own good who is afflicted, by humbling and bettering him that is truly Penitent. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, faith David, that I might learn thy Statutes. It is Sin that is the cause of all the Misery he feels, and therefore that must be more evil then his Misery. If a Potion be bitter by reason of Gall and Wormwood; the Gall and Wormwood that makes it so must be more bitter.

Thine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast for saken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hoasts to the Jews, Jerem. 2.19. And G 3

indeed this is the onely way for remedy of Afflictions. to be sensible of the Sin more then the Sufferings; to groan and shed Tears because we have offended God. not onely because we have brought Trouble on our felves. It is the way to take away the Cause of the Evil. and so the Bitterness of the Affliction. Death it felf, were it not for the Sting of Sin, could not harm us: take away the Conscience of Sin, and the weight of our Sufferings will be removed. If Sin be forgiven, if the Conscience be purged from dead works, either God will take away the Rod, or the Smart of it. Now the onely way to effect that is, to be affected with the Sin, and to loath it, to be weary of it, more then the presiure of the Cross. If we take any other course, though we houl on our Beds, though we should be weary with Groaning every night, and all the night make our Bed swim, and water our Couch with Tears; though we should wear Sackcloath, cast Ashes on our heads, creep to a Cross, whip our selves naked, go on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to weep at Christ's Sepulchre; this would make but a palliated Cure, our Wound would not be healed at the bottom, but it would fefter, and break out again, and gangrene, and become mortall. And therefore

#### VI. PROPOSITION.

The Penitent pious person, in the sense of his Sin and Misery, bemoaneth himself to God, confesseth and bewaileth his Sin, humbleth himself before him, deprecateth his Wrath, and earnestly seeketh by Prayer and Supplication for Forgiveness of Sin, Healing, and Peace from God: which is the last Conclusion, deduced from the Vocality of David's Weeping, vers. 8. The Lord hath beard the voice of my weeping.

There

and.

There was a Prayer in David's Tears, and that God heard. And we may fee how effectual this course is by the example of Manasseh King of Indah, who did evil in the light of the Lord, like unto the Abominations of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the Children of Israel: yea, he made Judah and the inhabitants of Terusalem to erre, and to doe worse then the Heathen. And the Lord Bake unto Manasseh, and to his people; but they would not hearken. And the Lord brought upon them the Captains of the hoast of the King of As-syria, which took Manasseh amongst the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in Affliction, he befought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Ferusalem into his Kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God, 2 Chron. 33. 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

By which Instance we may perceive what is the right course to be taken by any one whom God afflicts for Sin; he is to feek the Lord, to humble himfelf greatly, and to make his Supplication: also how efficacious a way this is to remove the greatest Evils from the greatest Transgressours. Nor is this Case of Manasseh a singular Case, but such as other passages of Holy Scripture warrant us to make a common Rule of, both for Duty, and for Success. For Duty, thus faith Feremiah, Lament. 3. 39, 40, 41, 42. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his Sins? Let us fearch and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens. We have transgressed and rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned. For Success, thus fpeaks Elibu, Job 33. 27, 28. He looketh upon men,

and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his Soul from going into the Pit, and his life shall see the light. For both, the Prophet feel speaks thus, (2. 12, 13.) Therefore also now saith the Lord, Turn you even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and weeping, and with mourning; And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God : for be is gracious and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the Evil. Whence may

be gathered,

I. That Complaints of our Punishments without Complaint of our Sins are vain and fruitless. It was to no purpose for living men to complain of the Evils they felt, while they were insensible of the Evils they did: for in so doing they justified not God in his Judgments on them, nor shewed any hatred of their own evil ways: but either were insensible of their Afflictions as from God's hand, and so gave him not the Glory of his Avenging act; or being sensible, hated God as an Enemy, dealing unrighteously with them, as not deserving it, and fretting against the Lord in heart, or blaspheming his Name because of their Plagues, as those mentioned Revel. 16. 11.

2. That the wifest and most successfull course that any can take in the time of God's Scourge upon them, is to fearch and try their ways, that is, to find out their Sins; which, till they be discovered, will be like Achan's Theft, which caused Israel to fall before the Canaanites. For if God set our Sins before him, and we do not set them before our selves, his Anger will burn us like fire, and we know not where to cast wa-

ter to quench it.

I confess, there are some Errours that we cannot find out: Pfal. 19. 12. Who can understand his Errours? And And for those, though we understand them not, we may escape Vengeance, if we know them in general, are sensible that we have a vicious or imperfect Nature, ignorant, and heedless of what we should know and doe. Yet those we should not be ignorant of, nor flight them as Peccadillo's, Venial fins in their own nature. S. Paul doubtless cried out of these, even the first motions of Concupiscence, without Consent, his very Lustings, which he hated: The Evil he would not doe, that he did; the Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind; as a body of Death, which made him wretched, and of which he enquires, Who shall deliver me from it? When David speaks of his Sins as exceeding the bairs of his head, doubtless he comprehends his Omissions, his imperfect Performances of Duties, Praying with distraction, Praising God with coldness, Hearing without attention of mind, giving Alms with felf-respect, the Mixtures of Evil with what was Good, his Vanity of thoughts, his Ignorance, Incogitancy, Excess in words, Jests, Merriments, and thoufands of fuch Failings; which though each of them be little, yet the Multitude of them made them too heavy a Burthen for him. Though Sand be but a fmall thing, yet Heaps of it may fink a Ship. So though Sins of Errour be but small, yet being many, they are to be known at least in the general, though we be ignorant of each particular. And accordingly David, when he had faid, Who can understand his Errours, adds, Cleanse thou me from secret Faults. These the Penitent must crave Pardon for, and therefore take notice that he is guilty of them, though he cannot make a particular Confession of them. S. Austin often urgeth against the Pelagians, that no man in this life is perfect, without Sin, because Christ teacheth us to pray, as for our daily Bread each day, so for Forgiveness of Sins each

each day: thereby intimating, that in the best, who call God Father, there are Peccata quotidiana incurfationis, Sins of daily incursion, (as Tertullian called them, ) which have need of Pardon; and that this must be begg'd of God. Pelagian ava naprhoia or Sinlesness, Popish Merit and keeping of the Law, Monkish works of Supererogation, Quakers imagined Perfection, are all proud and arrogant Dotages, contrary to Christ and his Gospel. We are to charge our selves with Sin in our daily Actions, yea to count all our Righteoufness as an Unclean thing: yet that which we should especially consider, should be our open and scandalous Sins, as bringing most Dishonour to God, and being

most pernicious to our selves.

3. In time of God's exercifing his punitive Justice, we should Confess our Sins to God, and complain of our selves to him. He that hideth his Sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy, faith Solomon, Prov. 28. 13. Auricular Confession to a Priest, as the Papists teach it, is but an Invention of men for their advantage; but Confession to God is a Duty necessary for our Salvation: wherein especially the Sin which God seems to point out by his Judgment is most freely to be acknowledged. As Joshua said to Achan, Josh. 7. 19. My Son, give, I pray thee, Glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make Confession unto him, and tell what thou hast done. Thus doe all truly Penitent persons in their Afflictions: and this is the way to recover out of their Affliction, if they deal plainly with God and Men.

4. To which, fourthly, it is necessary should be added Sorrow of heart, a contrite, broken and rended heart, Compunction of spirit, Remorse of Conscience for what we have done: and in some speciall cases, when the hand of God is fore upon us, and our Sin

hath

hath been eminently great, there must be Fasting, Weeping and Mourning for our Sins; yea the abundance and continuance of his Tears, David faith hyperbolically, watered his Couch, made his Bed to (wim, every or all the Night, with Groans unutterable, even unto weariness. As Manasseh sinned greatly, so he humbled himself greatly. Great Sins require great Flouds of Tears to wash them away. I know forced Tears, out of the fear of Hell, can but little avail with God: they may confift with love of Sin. There may be counterfeit Tears, which may be fo far from pacifying God, that they will incense him the more, as knowing himself mocked by them. There may be fo deep a fense of Sin, as to stupefy: but where there is a kindly melting of the Heart for Sin, Tears will likely follow; and if they be in fecret, they are likely fincere. And if we weep bitterly for Sin, with S. Peter, we may expect a gracious Forgiveness, as S. Peter had: but if we grieve not for our Sins, we may expect God will make our Sins grievous against our will.

5. Tears and Sorrow for Sin must be as David's weeping here, (Vocal,) with humble Supplication and earnest Prayer for Pardon. When there is a spirit of Grace and Supplication joyned with Mourning, then is God sought aright, and found by the Repenting person. Consession and Sorrow for Sin is but to make way for Prayer, which is the chief thing whereby God is gloristed, and the Sinner behefited. For then it is that his Heart turns to God, when it acknowledgeth its own Demerit, and God's Justice: and then God's Heart is turned to him; as it was to Rehoboam, when he and his people humbled themselves, and said, The Lord is Righteoms, 2 Chron. 12.6. Which Prescrip-

tions are effectuall, if

6. There be a Forsaking of Sin, and Obedience to H 2 God;

God; as faith the Prophet, Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked for sake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Which David here observes, and therefore adds, vers. 8. Depart from me, all ye workers of Iniquity; for the Lord bath heard the voice of my weeping : and Psal. 119. 115. Depart from me, ye Evil-doers; for I will keep the Commandments of my God. Surely, faith Elihu excellently, Job 34. 31, 32. it is meet to be said unto God, I have born Chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done Iniquity, I will doe no more. Relapses into Sin make mens cases the worse, so as that their latter end is worse then their beginning, 2 Pet. 2. 20. The Devil enters into fuch with more force; hardens his Heart the more, who hath feemed to repent, but betakes himself again like the Dog to his vomit, or the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; procures more Vengeance from God, who walks contrary to them that walk contrary to him, and when men are not reformed by Afflictions, punisheth them seven times more for their Sins, Levit. 26. 23, 24. And therefore Christ's Warning to the cured person is necessary for all that are holpen in their Affliction, Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to thee: and John Baptist's Advice is to be followed by all Penitents, Matth. 3. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for Repentance.

#### APPLICATION.

Give me leave now to speak to you that have heard me this day, as the Prophet Haggai did to Judah, Chap. 1. 5, 7. Consider your ways: how is it with you? He is a rare bird that is without Sickness, or Sorrows.

Every day, faith our Saviour, bath enough of Evil, Matth. 6. 34. And methinks none of you should be fo foolish as to say with Babylon, Revel. 18. 7. I sit as a Queen, and shall see no Sorrow. If any be so secure, as to be infenfible of other Afflictions, yet there should not be such a Stupidity in them, as to be mindless of Death and Judgment. I presume none of you are so mis-led by any spirit of Errour, that you conceive your felves perfect and without Sin: I fear too many of you are guilty of great Transgressions; I wish you were none of you such as fin presumptuously, against the Light of your Consciences, oppose the Truth, oppress the Poor, delight your Bodies, misspend your Time, misimploy your Estates and Abilities, and perhaps glory in your Profaneness, Swearing, Drinking, Cheating, Lying, Backfliding, False accusing, raifing Jars and Contentions. If any of you be guilty of any of these Sins, or have had experience of God's Hand in his Afflicting of him, or is fenfible of his Mortality; let him bethink himself how his Afflictions work on him, whether they bring his Sin to Remembrance; whether the Remembrance of his Sin be more grievous then his Sufferings; whether he complain of it, rather then his Affliction: let him fearch his waies, confess his Sins at least to God, weep and groan, as David, with real Sorrow according to God, which may canse Repentance not to be repented of; seek the Face of God with Supplication, and amend his waies. Hath not God rather cause to say of you as he did of the fews, Fer. 8.6, 7. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battel. Yea, the Stork in the beaven knoweth his appointed time, and the Turtle and the Crane and the Swallow observe the time of their coming: but my H 3 people

people know not the Judgment of their God. Will he not, when he observes your doings, find you rather Ranting in a Tavern, then Praying in the Church? rather Sporting in your Beds, then Watering them with Tears? Cheating one another in Gaming, rather then Relieving the Poor? Devising rather Mischief on your Beds, then Weeping for your unmercifull and unrighteous dealings in your Closets? regarding Passtimes more then holy Sermons? reading in your Chambers rather wanton Comedies, or light Poems, then the

Bible and Holy Writings?

Yea, let me ask the devoutest of you, whether at any time you do weep for your Sins of daily incursion. Are you sensible of your too much Formality, too little Fervency in your Prayers? Do you weep for your vain Thoughts, proud Imaginations, inordinate Defires, your Ignorance, Forgetfulness of many Duties, Slothfulness, Passionateness, Omissions of many Duties you should doe, Uncharitableness, Unthankfulness, and many other Sins of Errour and fecret Sins, which God knows, though men do not? Sure a fincere Christian is a weeping Christian: if God keep him from greater Enormities, yet he will find cause enough to mourn for his daily Aberrations; if he do (as a true Penitent doth) take notice of the Naughtiness of his own deceitfull Heart. If you say daily the Lord's Prayer, and be not sensible of your daily Sins, do you not mock God, when you fay, Forgive us our Sins? Sure Christ, when he directed the use of that Prayer, appointed you to be examining and judging your felves every day, to confess your Sins, to bemoan them, to ask Pardon for them, to resolve and vow against them every day. And, Oh that God would give you a Heart of Flesh, in stead of a Heart of Stone, you that are guilty of more hainous Crimes, fuch as I have named, or any other your own Con-

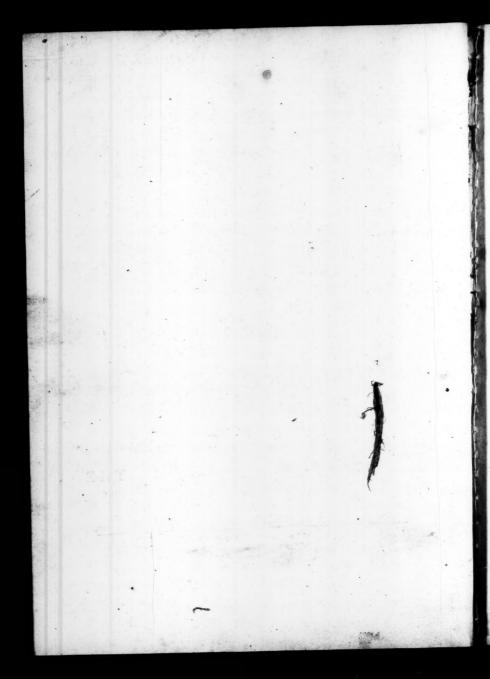
Consciences can inform you of; to imitate S. Peter, to goe out immediately after this Sermon is ended, and weep bitterly; to break off your Sins by Righteousness, as Da-

niel advised Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 4. 27.

And you that (though unblamable towards Men, yet) are conscious of offending God by any privy Transgressions, yea all of you who have any remainders of finfull Corruption in you, Oh that you would not defer, but this day, yea every day, imitate holy David in his holy vocall penitential Weeping, which hath been this day described to you: And let every Affliction you feel or fear, specially the thought of your Death, bring you to a daily practice of Repentance, and Supplication unto God, that your Iniquities may not be your Ruine; but that your Tranquillity may be lengthned here, and you may be bleffed for ever in the world to come. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE



#### THE

## PENITENT'S PRAYER.

# The Fourth SERMON.

PSALM li. 1,2.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy Loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Transgreffions.

Wash methroughly from mine Iniquity, and cleanse

me from my Sin.

E find in this Text a Sinner struck with the sense of his Sins, and pleading at the Mercy-seat of God for the Remission and Forgive-ness of them. If the Greatness of his Person, or the Sacredness of his Function, had been Antidote enough against Temptation, Armour of proof against the siery darts of Satan, we had not this day heard of David a Sinner; for he was a King, and he was a Prophet, and a man after God's own that. But since neither his Profession nor his Royalty could protect him from being a Sinner, and that in so foul and crimson Crimes as Adultery and Murther, (which occasioned the penning of this Psalm;) 'tis happy that we yet find him here a Penitent, and a complaining one: for we have him

here a Supplicant at his Prayers on his knees, with a Miserere mei, Deus, Have mercy on me, O God, &c.

What S. Paul said of himself, that his Fall and Recovery was a Pattern to all that should believe in Christ, may be as rightly said of David; The Lord permitted him to sin, that no man might presume, but the strongest Saint might take heed less the fall; that none might be high-minded, but fear: and the Lord also recovered him by Repentance, and hath lest his Confession and Absolution upon record, that none might despair; but that his Example might direct them to return to God after their Wandrings, and erect and keep up their spirits from sinking, by the assurance of his Mercy, so remarkably vouchsafed to so great a Transgressour.

And therefore if there be any Soul, that hears me this day, struck with a deep sense and horrour of his Sins, lying groaning and trembling under the heavy pressure and burthen of them, let him not despair of Pardon, either by reason of the Quality or Quantity of them: for here are Loving-kindnesses, or kind Mercies, a Multitude of tender Mercies; well expressed by Zachary, Luk. 1.78. the Bowells of Compassion of our God; fuch as are in a Woman, or rather exceeding the Compassion of a Woman on the Son of her womb, Isa. 49. 15. Loving-kindness of God, against Unkindness of Man; Bowells of Mercy towards him who had no Compassion on himself; mercifull Remembrance of him who forgat his God and himself; awakening and faving him, who in his infentible Lethargy of Impenitence would have destroyed himself. Whoever thou art, know that the Holy Ghost hath recorded this Story for thy Confolation: not onely fet David's Fall before thee; but likewise the means of his Recovery. the many and tender Mercies of his God. As the Prophet Nathan was sent to David, so David himself

himfelf.

is fent to thee. He extends and reaches out to thee the same Physick that he took himself. And therefore distrust not thy Cure; but come and hear David bitterly bewailing his Condition, and with him bewail sadly thine own: See him weeping, and weep thou as fast: Hear his Voice and Cry piercing the Clouds; and be not thou dumb, but as loud as he, till thou hast awakened the Compassion of thy God. Observe all this, and say with him, Have mercy upon me, O God, &c.

Which words are the main Petition of this Holy Supplicant in behalf of himself, for pardoning Grace, out of the deep sense of his great Sins, and apprehension of God's great Mercies. And they exhibit to us,

1. David's Malady, the Disease which pained him to the heart, which made him groan, cry out, and be instant with the great Physician of Souls for Cure: which is expressed with Aggravation in three words. I. Transgression; a word that notes sometimes Rebellion or Revolt from God. 2. Iniquity or Perverseness; importing his Unrighteousness to Vriah, his Wife, Himfelf, his Child by her, his whole House and People, who all tasted of the bitterness of his eating that forbidden fruit. 3. Sin or Errour; intimating the great Folly which he now deprehended in yielding fo to his Lust, as to erre from God's Command, and for a little Pleasure, to draw on himself the Wrath of God, and the Horrour of Conscience now upon him. He useth not mincing or diminutive terms, as those that love their Sins as fond Parents do their Children, and call their Monstrosities small Blemishes: but paints out his Sins in their most ugly Deformity, to shew his Hatred of them to the utmost, and to justifie God fully. Year he useth those very terms to express his Sins by, which God himself used in his most blessed Declaration of himself, when he proclaimed of himself, Exod. 34. 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. To which it is very likely he had an eye, and that he made that Proclamation the rise of his Hope, That though his Sins were great, yet they were not any other then God had proclaimed of old, he did forgive; and after in his New Covenant he more fully assured the Condonation of them: Jer. 31.34. Heb. 8.12.

2. The thing David requesteth of God: and that

is full Remission, expressed in three terms.

1. Of Blotting out his Transgressions; a phrase used by the Prophet Isa. 43. 25. and 44. 22. And it intimates, that his Sins were written by God in his Remembrance, as in a Book of Records: in the sense that Job said, 13. 26. and 14. 17. God did write bitter things against him, and sealed up his Iniquity. And the blotting it out, is the putting it out of his Remembrance, so as not to charge it upon him, nor condemn him for it: as it is explained Isa. 43. 25.

2. Of Washing him throughly from his Iniquity; a term noting frequent or abundant washing: that is, Absolution, meant by Ablution, I Cor. 6. 11. where it comprehends fustification as well as Santification. And so it is said, Revel. 1. 5. Christ hath washed us from our Sins in his own bloud; alluding, 'tis likely, to the cleansing of men from their Leprosy and other Legall

Pollutions in the Mosaicall Law.

3. The third term is, Cleanse me from my Sin; by Emundation meaning Emendation, purifying his Heart from the love of his Sin, and his Life from the practice of it any more: as it is expressed Isa.1.16,17. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evil, learn to doe well.

3. The

3. The Third thing confiderable in David's Petition (which is indeed the Hindge on which all turns) is, the Loving-kindness or Benignity of God, the Multitude of his tender Mercies; such as are in the Womb or Bowells of a tender Mother towards her Child. And this Loving-kindness and Multitude of tender Mercies is urged by David as the Motive, the impulsive Cause, or fole Reason of granting his Request; of blotting out his Transgressions, washing him throughly from his Iniquity, and cleanfing him from his Sin. In the same manner as Moses pleaded with God for Israel, Num. 14. 17, 18,19. after whose Copy this Petition seems to be framed, and is an exact Pattern according to which a Penitent Supplicant is to address himself to God for Ease from under the pressure of his Sins; teaching us these Points.

1. That the Remembrance of his Sin is the greatest Grievance to a Penitent Sinner. David complains not of other Evils incident to him and his, but his own Sin.

2. That a Penitent Sinner doth not mince or lessen his Sin, but setteth it out or confessent it to God in its greatest Aggravations, in variety of odious Appellations, when he betakes himself to God for Redress.

3. That the Blotting out of our Transgressions, the Washing throughly from our Iniquity, the cleansing

from our Sin, is to be fought from God.

4. That we are to beg earnestly, not onely for Blotting out our Transgressions, but also for through Washing and Cleansing from Iniquity and Sin, not onely by Condonation of them, but also by Emendation and Amendment of life.

5. That it is Loving-kindness and multitude of tender Mercies which is the Motive whereupon God blotteth out Transgressions, washeth throughly the guilty

Sinner from Iniquity, and cleanfeth him from his Sin.
6. That the onely way to obtain these things is, to beg them of God upon this consideration, and no other.

You see a large field and copious matter is before us, in which I might exspatiate far, and prosecute a long time: but I will endeavour to abbreviate, and end with the time.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That the Remembrance of his Sin is the greatest Grie-

vance to a Penitent Sinner.

This is evident from their penitential Complaints. In the many mournfull Elegies of David, the great Pressure of his spirit lay in the Remembrance of his Sin. Psal. 38. 3, 4, 5. There is no rest in my bones, because of my Sin. For mine Iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me. My Wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my Foolishness. And again, Psal. 40. 12. Innumerable Evils have compassed me about, mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more then the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.

It is true, Afflictions are hard to be born: Poverty, and Disgrace, and Imprisonment, and Pains of body, are very heavy upon many persons; Discontents, and Fears of trouble, Griess and Sorrows for loss of Friends, Wise, Children, do often quench mens spirits, and sink them into the Grave. Nor is it to be denied, but that many times they cause men to prefer death before life, and to chuse strangling before breathing, Job 7. 15. But upon the sense of Sin, when the Conscience feels the weight of it, when God shoots his Arrows into a man, and baret lateri lethalis Arundo, the deadly Arrow

**fticks** 

sticks in his side; then the Venome thereof drinks up his spirit, is as the stinging of a Scorpion or fiery flying Serpent, it tortures like Hell, and is more bitter and terrible then Death it self. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; (faith Solomon, Prov. 18. 14.) but a wounded spirit who can bear? In other Afflictions there is some Remedy, from Reason or Faith, if not to comfort, yet to quiet the Soul: but in the fense of Sin committed (till Pardon thereof be apprehended ) no Argument can be fastned, but will be rejected. Men in these Wounds of Conscience doe like persons in extreme Anguish, who tear off their Plaisters that should ease or cure them: so do wounded Consciences reject all Allegations of Scripture, brought to allay their Anguish, as if they belong'd not to them; as Spira and others have done. And that which is the Sting of Sin, that most of all makes it deadly poisonous, is the apprehension of God as angry, as an Enemy unappeafable, (till it be acknowledged to be what it is, an evil and bitter thing that we have sinned against the Lord, and that his fear is not in us; as the Prophet speaks, fer. 2. 19.) Which leads me to the

### IL OBSERVATION.

That a Penitent Sinner doth not mince or lessen his Sin, but sets it out or confesseth it to God in its greatest Aggravations, in variety of odious Appellations, when he

betakes himself to God for Redress.

So David, besides the variety of terms he here paints out the Desormity of his Sins by, adds also vers. 3, 4. I acknowledge my Transgressions, and my Sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee onely, have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy sight. And to set out his Sin as the more venomous, he derives it from his original innate

Pra-

Pravity: Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my mother conceive me, vers. 5. And S. Paul acknowledged himself the chiefest of Sinners, I Tim. 1.15. The

Reasons hereof are,

I. Because otherwise the Heart loves and favours the Sin, and the Repentance and Humiliation will appear to be but seigned. True Hatred of Sin will cause us to consess and abandon it with all our might. Odium est Appetitus amovendi: it will stir up a desire to remove it, it will cause Detestation, Clearing, Revenge, Indignation, Zeal, Fear; as it is said of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 7. II. The poor Publican durst not list up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be mercifull to me a Sinner, Luk, 18. 13.

2. By this means he justifies God in his Sentence against his Sin, in his Punishment; acknowledgeth his own Desert: which is the Reason here, That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest, vers. 4. The more we aggravate our Sins, the more we magnify the Justice of God's Law, and

his dealing with us.

3. It also tends to the magnifying of God's Grace in Pardoning; that where Sin abounds, there Grace overabounds, Rom. 5. 20. It is rich Grace that forgives great and many Sins. They that make their Sins venial, and speak of them as small matters, do shew they take themselves little beholden to God to pardon them, and that they owe little thanks for it. To whom much is forgiven, he loveth much; to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little, Luk. 7. 47.

4. This is the way to obtain Pardon. He that hideth his Sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and for saketh them shall have mercy, Prov. 28. 13. Stultorum incurata Pudor malus Ulcera celat. They are foolish persons, that when they are to make use of a Physician,

conceal their Disease, and tell not the worst of it: for thereby they disable the Physician from Curing them, and are Authours of their own death. But a wise Patient will relate all the Symptoms of his Disease, and declare the worst of it; that so there may be a through, and not a palliated Cure. So it is with a true Penitent, he declares his Sin to God with the greatest Shame to himself, in all its evil Circumstances, that he may dispose God to forgive him: it being God's way, to justify them that condemn themselves; as the poor Publican, that with a dejected heart and look craved mercy to him a Sinner. Which brings us to the

#### III. OBSERVATION.

That the Blotting out of our Transgressions, the Washing throughly from our Iniquity, the Cleansing from our

Sin, is to be fought from God.

This was the course which David took, and Manasfeb, 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13. When he was in Affliction, he befought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his Supplication. No such Prayer to be found in Scripture, as is in the Office of the Romanists, (Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, defend us from the Enemy, grant Pardon to the guilty.) Christ directs us to fay, Our Father, which art in Heaven, forgive us our Trespasses. And good Reafon: for, I. Our Sins are against him, and therefore are to be pardoned by him. Against thee have I sinned, faith David; therefore do thou blot out my Transgreffions. He must cancel the Bond, who is the Creditor. I will say to my Father, saith the Prodigall son, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. 2. It is he onely that hath hath power to forgive Sins. Who can forgive Sins but God onely? Mark 2. 7. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one, Job 14.4. It is God's Prerogative, which he challengeth, Ifa. 43. 25. I, even I am be that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins. It is true, the Son of man had power on earth to forgive Sins; but he was also the Son of God. It is true, the Apostles had power to remit Sins by a peculiar delegation from Christ, or (as the Apostle S. Paul speaks) in the perfon of Christ, 2 Cor. 2. 10. Nor is it to be denied, that Ministers of the Gospel, ministerially, by preaching the Gospell, may be said to forgive Sins declaratively, and instrumentally, by bringing men to Repentance and Faith, on which Forgiveness and Cleansing from Sin follow: but not as the Pope pretends to forgive Sins, by his Indulgences, authoritatively; or as the Popish Priests, by their Absolution, certainly and immediately. Men may forgive Sins, by the affuring of Pardon to the truly Penitent and Believing. And the Absolution of the Minister is of great moment to quiet the guilty Conscience, if he doe it (Clave non errante; ) when he is skilfull in Binding and lofing, and the Penitent freely confesseth, and sincerely believeth in Christ, and unfeignedly purposeth to amend ; without which the Absolution is invalid. And therefore, which was the

### IV. OBSERVATION.

The Penitent Sinner is to beg earnefly, not onely for Blotting out his Transgressions, but also for through Wa-floing and Cleansing from Iniquity and Sin, not onely by Condonation of them, but also by Emendation or Amendment of life.

So David, Psal. 51. 9, 10. Hide thy face from my Sins, and blot out all mine Iniquities. Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me. These are to be conjoyned. As the Guilt of Sin is to be pardoned, and the Stain of Sin to be washed away: so is the Conscience to be purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God; the Heart is to be sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and the Body to be washed with pure water; as the expressions are Heb. 9. 14. and 10. 22. allusively to the Legall Purifying with bloud and water, to which answers the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5. which is thus expressed by S. Paul, Rom. 6. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

And this is a principal part of true Repentance, to have a renewed Heart, and to lead a new Life. And therefore S. John Baptist, when the multitude came to him to be baptized of him for the Remission of Sins, chargeth them to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, Luk. 3. 7, 8. letting them to understand, that every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is bewn down, and cast into the fire. And our Saviour, when he found the impotent man, who was healed by him at the Pool of Bethefda, told him, Joh. 5. 14. Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. For, as Christ faith, if after the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man, he return again, and findeth the house empty, swept and garnished; that is, after the Sinner in some fort hath repented, and his Conscience hath been quieted, and his former Courses relinquished for a time, he grow secure and loose in his Conversation; the unclean Spirit taketh with him seven

other Spirits more wicked then himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse then the first, Matth. 12. 43, 44, 45. Satan doth make fuch a person more finfull then before, and his Condition is worse then it was before his seeming Repentance. Most truly doth S. Peter tell us, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22. If after persons have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse then the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the boly Commandment delivered unto them. But it happens. to them according to the true Proverb, The Dog is returned to his own vomit again, and the Sow that was washed. to her wallowing in the mire. As it is with men who relapse into a Fever which was for a time abated, their Disease grows worse and mortal: so is it with them that after some imperfect Change and Peace acquired, do fall back into the same or other Sins, become fecure and heedless of Temptations; they commonly become more notorious Sinners, and more hardned therein to their perdition. None likely make a mock of Sin, and sport themselves in Evil, more then they who once seemed to be humbled, penitent, and reformed. And therefore there is as great a necessity of begging for effectuall Renovation, as Condonation, from God; Sanctification throughout, in Body, Soul and Spirit, as well as Justification from all our Transgressions. To which the onely Motive is God's Loving-kindness, and the multitude of his tender Mercies; according to the next Observation.

#### V. OBSERVATION.

That it is Loving-kindness and multitude of tender Mercies which is the Motive whereupon God blots out Transgressions, washeth throughly the guilty Sinner from his Ini-

quity, and cleanseth him from his Sin.

As God said of the people of Israel, that it was not for their Excellency, Multitude, Righteonsness, or Uprightness of heart, that he took them to be his People, Deut. 7. 7. and 9. 5. but out of his own Compassion; Ezek. 16. 5, 8, 9. speaks of them under the Similitude of an unpitied outcast infant, till he pitied, loved, washed and cloathed them: so it is true concerning every person that is saved, that is justified and sanctified, that he is before unclean, till the Loving-kindness of God towards him appears. Not by Works of Righteonsness which he hath done, but according to his Mercy, God our Saviour saves him by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost: That being justified by his Grace, he may be made Heir according to the hope of eternall life, Tit. 3. 4, 5, 7.

And indeed all that is done by us, before God pardons and cleanfeth us from Sin, provokes God against us: nor is there so much as a thought in us of returning to God, after our departure from his waies; nor any help in our selves to deliver our own Souls, till he pities us and saves us. O Israel, (saith God, Hosea 13.9.) thou hast destroyed thy self; but in me is thine help. He blotteth out our Transgressions for his own Name's sake,

and out of his abundant Mercy through Christ.

It is through the Bloud of Christ, as a Price of anfwerable value, that he redeems us: and yet it is mere Mercy that procures this for the payment of our Debt. So that full Satisfaction to his Justice and free Remis-K 2 fion do well consist together, notwithstanding the exceptions of Socinians. And we must still acknowledge, that it is not for our sakes, but for his holy Name's sake, that he cleanseth us from our Iniquities: and upon this consideration, he will be inquired of by repenting Sinners to doe it for them; as it is said Ezek, 36. 22, 33, 37. Which brings us to the last or

#### VI. OBSERVATION.

That the onely way to obtain Deletion of Transgressions, and Cleansing from Sin, is to beg them of God, upon consideration of the multitude of his Mercies, and his Love in

and through Christ.

So did the poor Publican obtain Justification by his crying Peccavi, and supplicating thus, God be mercifull to me a Sinner: whom Christ propounds as an Example of a prospering Penitent, excluding the felf-justifying Pharifee from attaining Righteousness. This is the Gospell-way, to address our selves to the Throne of Grace; to confess our Sins; to trust onely to the blond of Christ, for cleansing us from all Sin; to make use of him as our Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for our Sins. In him we have Redemption through his blond, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the riches of his Grace, Eph. 1.7. This is the way whereby God will be glorified, and we shall be saved. And therefore fill our Litany must be, Kie es, ixinoor, Lord, have mercy on us; or, with David, Lord, be mercifull unto me, heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee.

#### APPLICATION.

And now it behoves you that have heard David's Petition opened unto you, to apply his Case to your

thither 3.

own Souls. You have finned, as David did; if not in the same kind, yet in Sins enough to fink you into the Lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Can any of you say, My Heart is clean? I am pure from my Sin? Can any of you deny that you were shapen in Iniquity, and that in Sin your Mother conceived you? Will not your own Conscience, if you heed it, inform you of many unholy and unrighteous Thoughts, Words, and Deeds? If there should be any self-boasting Pharifee, any ignorant Papist, that imagines he can keep the Law of God, and merit Heaven by his Works; any deluded Quaker or other Fanatick, that conceives himself perfect, without Sin; If there should be any Protestant Justitiary, that conceives so well of his Innocence, that he thinks God should wrong him, if he fhould damn him; so well of his Good deeds, Prayers, Alms, Religious performances, at Church or in private, as to expect Heaven as wages due to them in exact Justice: let him consider, that he prefers himself before holy David, S. Paul, and fuch other holy Saints as have gone before us to Heaven.

Christ hath told us, he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and that no man cometh to the Father but by him, Joh. 14. 6. And S. Peter tells us, Act. 4. 12. Neither is there Salvation in any other but Christ: for there is none other Name under Henven given among men whereby we must be saved. And therefore as it was said once to a Novatian by the Emperour, Thou that thinkest thy self persect, set up thy Ladder, and climb up to Heaven by thy self, if thou canst: so may I say to thee, Make the best thou canst of thine own Righteousness, thou shalt sind the way to Salvation by thine own Works a way unknown to the holy Saints, untroden by them; none there ever got thinher that way. That is not Sedia Cell, the Ladder of Heaven, by which the Saints climbed.

thither; but Scala Gehenne, the Precipice by which proud Pharisees, superstitious Monks and Friers, ignorant Quakers and formal Protestants, that trust to their own Devotions and Good deeds, tumble down to Hell.

I befeech you then, as you love the Salvation of your Souls, feriously examine your selves, whether you that have sinned with David, do repent with David. Complain of your Sins; be sensible of them as your most heavy Burthen; consess them to God with detestation: be instant for Cleansing from Sin through the multitude of God's Mercies: hope for Pardon and Righteousness onely through Christ's Atonement by the Sacrifice of himself, and his Intercession in Heaven: have a settled purpose of Amendment of life: be impatiently importunate with God for a new Heart and a new Spirit: and expect these things, and whatever Good your Souls want, onely through the Loving-kindness and free Grace of God in Christ.

If it be so with you, I may assure you of Blessedness, and tell you from the Spirit of God, that Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile, Psal. 32. 1, 2. cited by S. Paul, Rom. 4. 7, 8. to prove the Blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works. I may tell you from him, Rom. 8. 1. There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

But if you be insensible of Sins, unhumbled for them, neither confess them freely, nor bewail them mournfully; fly not to the multitude of God's Mercies for Pardon; trust to other things for Salvation then Christ's Merits; find no change of your Hearts, nor alteration of your Lives, nor work of renewing Grace in your minds;

nor beg it of God as a thing most necessary for you: I may truly say, you stumble at the Stumbling-stone; and that you will (unless God awaken you, and change your minds,) die in your Sins, and perish for ever.

Be perswaded then to follow the Example of David, S. Paul, and other holy Saints: find out by God's Law your Sins; confess them to God; bemoan them with hatred; beg for Mercy in the Forgiveness of them: trust to the Obedience of Christ in his dying for you, his appearing with his Bloud before God: magnify God's Grace, and Christ's Love: pray for a new Heart, and study to live a holy Life, and thou shalt be blessed. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE

#### THE

## TRUE PENITENT.

## The Fifth SERMON.

PSALM li. 3.

For I acknowledge my Transgression, and my Sin is ever before me.

HIS Psalm is one of the Penitentials, occasioned by the greatest Sins which David committed, the greatest Rebuke which ever he underwent; and therefore penned with the greatest Compunction of spirit, and most vehement Deprecation of his Guilt and Punishment, of any which he composed. After the Inscription of the Psalm, which shews that it was framed after his Conviction by Nathan the Prophet, and the Denunciation of Divine Vengeance, for his Adultery and Murther, he instantly craves Pardon with variety of Expressions, and most prevalent Motives, doubling and redoubling his Petitions, and adding this forcible Reason, which the words of my Text yield, For I acknowledge my Transgression, &c. Wherein,

1. He professeth ingenuously his Agnition of his Transgressions, as most hainous, of deep dye, Crimson, Scarlet Sins, Red Sins, Bloud-guiltines, and damnable

Uncleanness.

2. That he did not slightly take notice thereof; but that as his Sin stared in his face to his great Horrour, so he set it before him for his deep Humiliation: and that not onely for a fit, while the Prophet's Conviction was fresh in his memory; but for a continuance, it was ever before him; he mourned, and intended to mourn for it all or most of his days, to repent and abhor himself in dust and ashes. God had set it before his sace by his Prophet; and he did set it continually before his face as an humble Penitent. And therefore he importunes God with strong hope for mercifull Forgiveness.

In the Text we have many considerable things to be observed, concerning the estate of an holy and humble

Penitent. As.

1. He owns his Transgressions and his Sins, as by and from himself. (My Transgression, and My Sin.)

2. He doth not extenuate, but aggravate them, by various terms, denoting their Criminousness. (Transgreffions, and Sin.)

3. He doth freely acknowledge and confess them to

God and Men.

4. He makes not this a short transient Action, but his Sin is ever before him. He continues this Humiliation as just and equal, by reason of the greatness of his Iniquity.

5. He pleads this as a Reason to induce God to a compassionate relenting towards him, and a gracious

Condonation.

Of these briefly in their Order.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

A Penitent Sinner owns his Sin as from himself.

He doth not as Eve did, father it on the Serpent;
or as Adam, on Eve; but imputes the acting of it to
his

or

his own innate Pravity, as the fountain and spring out of which it did iffue. And that is indeed a right derivation of it. Every man, faith S. James, (1. 14, 15.) is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own Lusts and enticed. Then when Lust bath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death. Perditio tua ex te, O Israel, said God to Israel, Thy destruction is of thy self. And the same may be faid of all Sinners.

The Providence of God orders the Occasions of Sin: but it is Man's own Free will that chuseth to fin upon these Occasions. God ordered Bathsheba's washing her felf, and David's walking on the roof of the house: but he put not Lust into David's heart, or the wicked contrivance of her Defilement. Uriah's affaulting Rabbah, and the Souldiers falling upon Uriah, were by Divine Providence: but the Plot of David, and execution of it by Toab, were of humane Maliciousness.

Impenitent Sinners charge their Wickedness on their ill Fortune, unhappy Destiny, unlucky Planet: which is done with the like reason as if the Knife were to be blamed for a man's Self-murther; or the Bread he eats, as the cause that he is choaked; or the Girdle he wears, that he was strangled by it. Planets and other natural Agents, though they have Influence on the Body, which may provoke to Evil, yet they cannot necesfitate the Mind to affent to it, or to act accordingly. Casual Concurrence of things may prompt, but not compell to Sin. Evil Company, bad Counsel, cruel Tyrants, may have power on the Members, not the Will. It is true, the Devil is the Father of Lies; He that committeth Sin is of the Devil: but were it not that man's Heart did entertain his Motions, embrace his Suggestions, Sin could not be engendred by them. So that in vain doth the corrupt spirit of a man accuse things

or persons, without himself, as the Authours or Causes of his sinfull Evils: the Judge of Heaven will lay it at his own door, and endite him as guilty of the Crime. And so do all wise and holy persons. We all do fade as a leaf, and our Iniquities like the wind have taken no away. Behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned, Isa. 64. 5, 6. Nor do they lessen the Fault, but aggravate it, as David doth here: which was the Second thing observable in an humble Penitent.

#### II. OBSERVATION.

The Penitent Sinner makes not a light matter of his

Sin, but acknowledgeth the Grievonsness of it.

This is manifest by all the Examples of humble Penitents in the Scripture. We have sinned, saith holy Daniel, Dan. 9. 5. and have committed Iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy Precepts and from thy Judgments. And holy Ezra, (9.6.) O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our Iniquities are increased over our heads, and our Trespass is grown up unto the Heavens. Thus when the justified Publican prays, he dares not lift up his eyes to Heaven, but smites on his breaft, saying, God be mercifull to me a Sinner. And S. Paul censures himself as the chief of Sinners, for those Sins he committed in Ignorance and Unbelief. He knows that God fees more evil in his Sins then he himself can discern; that Sins are not to be censured according to mens estimation, but God's most pure Law and righteous Judgment; that God is of purer eyes then to behold Evil, and that he cannot look on Iniquity with the least approbation or connivence; that what is highly prized in mens eyes, or made a venial Sin by men, is counted a foul Abomination with

with God; that the least Sin is against an Infinite Majesty, and cost no less then the Bloud of the Son of God to expiate it; that there is no Venial Sin in its own nature, to say, Raca, Thou fool, to our Brother, makes a man liable to Hell-sire; that every Sin is of the Devil, who sinned from the beginning; that the mages of Sin, every Sin, is Death, even that Death which is

opposite to everlasting Life.

Hence it is that David makes not a small matter of the Sins of his youth, but prays God not to remember them: and Job complaineth, that God wrote bitter things against him, and made him to possess the Sins of bis youth. And Christ makes idle words fuch, as that for them men are to be accountable at the day of Judgment. Popish Doctrine of Venial Sins, Resolutions of Cases of Conscience after Popish Casuilts Dictates, are not found in the expressions of Scripture-Penitents; much less Pharifaicall Vauntings of Self-righteousness, or Monkish Ostentation of their own Merits, or Quakers Opinions of Innocency and Perfection: but Acknowledgment of their Transgressions and Sins, with the hainous Degree and Circumstances of them. Which was David's profession here, and is an instance of an humble Penitent's practice.

#### III. OBSERVATION.

He freely confesseth and acknowledgeth his Sin, at least

to God, and sometimes to men.

Though David often professeth his Innocency in respect of the Criminations which were cast upon him in Saul's Court, as if he had conspired against him; though he alledge his Integrity before God, as being upright in heart, in promoting God's Worship, not going after any other gods, but in the choice of his

Soul preferring the Observance of God's Laws before any Ends of his own; yet he still acknowledgeth his Sins to God, without any arrogant vaunting of Perfection, or opinion of unspotted Holiness. I acknowledge my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid, faith he. Psalm 32. 5. And holy fob, although he could not be beaten out of his hold, (the conscience of his Integrity before God, and his Innocence from any Oppresfion of men, with which his Antagonists charged him,) yet disclaims the Covering of his Transgressions, as Adam, by hiding his Iniquity in his bosome, Job 31. 33. And Chap. 7. 20. he bespeaks God thus; I have sinned, what shall I doe unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? And again, Chap. 40. 4. Behold, I am vile, what shall I

answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

All Holy persons do subscribe to that of Bildad, Job 25. 4. 5. 6. that in comparison of God, in his light no man living can be justified. How can he be clean that is born of a woman? They know that God searcheth the Heart, discerns the windings and turnings of their deceitfull Hearts: that they have fecret Sins, which neither other men nor themselves perceive. S. Paul once conceived himself, touching the Righteonsness of the Law, blameless: while he was ignorant of its Spirituality, he observed not how the Law forbade Coveting, the very first Motions of Lust: But when he knew how holy and perfect the Law was, how imperfect he was; when he found a Law in his Members rebelling against the Law of his Mind, and leading him into captivity to the Law of Sin, which was in his Members; he then cries out, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7. Such is the Affection of the most inlightned Saints, who have been best acquainted with God's Purity, the Perfection of his Law, their own Impurity, and the Defect in their

ways, that they have always cried out of themselves, (as the Lepers in the Law) We are unclean, we are unclean. In their Supplications to God, they have bemoaned their finfull Thoughts, their most hidden Transgressions: yea in their Transgressions against men. when doing right to them, and giving glory to God hath required it, they have not stuck in full Congregations to confess their Errours, and to bewail their Transgressions. Which thing hath been always neceffary,

1. To justifie God in his Sentence and Judgments; that he might be justified in his sayings, and be clear when he is judged: as it is in the next verse to my

Text.

2. To abase Man, that he may lie prostrate at his feet, and not proudly lift up his head before God.

Both which Ends are discernible in that humble Confession of Daniel, and his speech to God, Dan.9.7. O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us Confusion of faces, because of our Trespass committed against thee.

For which Ends, as God sets our Iniquities before us, so the humble Penitent always sets his Sins before

his face; as David did here.

#### IV. OBSERVATION.

He makes not this a short transient Action, but his Sins

are ever before him.

There is indeed a fetting our Iniquities before our faces which is pernicious; when we look upon our Sins as of so horrid a Guilt that they are unpardonable: as when Cain told God, Gen. 4. 13. My Punishment is greater then I can bear; or, Mine Iniquity is greater then that it may be forgiven. So indeed it falls

out sometimes, that mens Transgressions (when they have sinned presumptuously, against Conviction of Conscience within, and Warnings without,) do so stare in their faces, that they affright them with terrour and astonishment: their Spirits are wounded: they apprehend the Devil haling them to the infernal Prison; expect nothing but Hell and Damnation; cry out of God as Cruel, of themselves as Damned wretches.

Such a View of Sin, as thus tends to Despair, that eyes onely God's Justice and their own Desert, that begets Hatred of God as a Tyrant, no Address to him as a Gracious Prince, is indeed very dangerous.

Humble Penitents do not so set their Iniquities before them: This is the manner onely of despairing Saul's, revolting Spira's, fuch as have finned wilfully with an high hand, and continue in their Apoltafie from the Truth; that fay, There is no hope: we have loved strangers, and after them will we go, Jer. 2. 25. But returning Sinners remember their Sins, and they are ever before them, in another manner, and to another purpole. They present their Sins to themselves, that they may shame themselves, and give Glory to God in acknowledging his Righteoufness; without deniall of his Grace. They look not onely on the foulness of their Trespasses, and the greatness of their Debts; but also on the riches of God's Grace, the fulness of Christ's Obedience, the inexhaustible fountain of Christ's Bloud, the infallible Assurance of the New Covenant, the ample Promises of the Gospel: and accordingly, with Confession of Sin they adjoyn Prayer for Pardon, Faith in Christ's Bloud; and plead God's declaration of his own Properties, his former dealing with great Transgressours; and in the same manner as David did here. V. O B-

#### V. OBSERVATION.

The true Penitent tells God of setting his Iniquities before him, to induce God to relenting Compassion towards

him, and gracious Condonation of him,

In the Penitentiall Pfalm De profundis, (130. 2, 3, 4.) the Penitent Sinner thus bespeaks God; Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my Supplication. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark Iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Even the wicked Ninevites had so much apprehension of the possibility of God's mercifull Clemency, that (after Jonas's Proclamation of their approaching Ruine) they refolved to cry mightily to God upon this appreliension, Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that we perish not? Jon. 3. 9.

Tis true, they that worship the Devil, and pray to him, doe all out of Fear, as looking for nothing but Cruelty from unclean Spirits: But Jonas in his froward fit, Chap. 4. 2. acknowledgeth that the Lord is a gracious God, and mercifull, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness, and repenteth bim of the Evil. Even by the experience of them that know not God, this is found true: which made even Infidels cry unto the Lord in their Distresses, and confess their Sins in hope of Help. The believing Penitent knows both by experience, and from the Nature, Works and Word of God, that when he fets his Sins before him, God cafts them behind his back: that God looks upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his Soul from the Pit, and his Life shall see the Light, Job 33. 27, 28. They have learned, that he that hideth his M 2 Sins

Sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have Mercy, Prov. 28. 13. That, if we confess our Sins, he is faithfull and just to forgive us our Sins: and the Bloud of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all Sin, I Joh. I. 7, 9. They judge, that what David found they shall find: I said, I will confess my Transgressions to the Lord; and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin. And therefore, For this shall every one that is Godly pray unto thee in a time that thou maist be found, Psal. 32. 5, 6. And consequently, it is their course, (as being best for them) to set their Sins before them, so as to humble them; and to set them before God, that he may pardon them.

#### APPLICATION.

And now, I befeech you, lay all that I have faid to heart, as of greatest concernment to each of you. What David did, what all the Saints have done in all Ages, you should doe in this; their Practice should be your Pattern: It is necessary to be done, though it be much

against the spirits of men.

Most men are quick-fighted in viewing the Faults of others, but blear-eyed when they are to look upon their own Crimes: Cenfuring and Judging others is very frequent; Self-judging is very rare. They that would take a Mote out of their Brother's eye, will not take notice of the Beam in their own. Few are willing to have their Sins set before them by others; and themselves are far from setting them before them of their own accord. A free Reprover is accounted intolerable. Men hate them that rebuke them. Yea, a Minister, who by Office is bound to doe it, though he doe it to fave their and his own Soul, yet he is not endured for it, but declined and persecuted. They that

that cannot deny their Sins, yet put off the Faultiness of them to some other Cause. They that acknowledge their Sins to have been from themselves, yet excuse and extenuate them. Scarce a man confesseth his Sins that are hidden from men: if he do confess them to God, it is but slightly. What a Beast was I? saith the Drunkard; God forgive me, saith the Swearer: though the one wallows in his Intemperance day after day, and the other profanes the Name of God every hour.

Thus Sin is flightly acknowledged by the Sinner, without any fense of the Iniquity of his Nature, or the Love he hath to his Sin, which are the Causes of it; without any Compunction of heart, without Remorse of Soul, without Bemoaning it to God, in Supplications, bewailing his Folly, his Naughtiness, and ear-

nestly, humbly begging Pardon.

Yea, when God fets mens Sins (by his Judgments on them) in order before them, they will not fet them before themselves, to give him the Glory of his Justice: when his Hand is lifted up, they will not see: when he makes their Hearts ake, their Eyes weep, by his Strokes for their Sins, they fret with Anger, but weep not out of Sorrow for Sin.

No marvel that men find not the Comfort of God's pardoning Grace, when they flubber over this great Business (which the Godly have always found to be the right and onely way to Mercy) in so dull and negligent a manner, as if they could deal with God as with an Idol, that hath neither eyes to see their Impenitency, nor hands to punish their Sins: and so carry themselves as if they could mock God with a few words of course, without any serious or hearty Sorrow for their Disobedience to God's Law, and Provocation of his terrible Majesty.

Oh that you would in time repent throughly of this M 3 your

your want of Repentance, or the perfunctory doing of it. And that you would bethink your felves, that you may deceive your felves, but cannot deceive God: that your Dallying with God will end in your Damnation: that you will never have Peace with him, till you shew that you count and use your Sins as his and your Enemies.

Doe this then which David faith he did, Search out your Sins impartially, know them to be your own Brats; that the least of them are of a Viperous brood; that they will bring upon you everlasting Punishment, without much Repentance and real Amendment.

Set your Sins before you in their ugly shape: Set God before you as a severe Judge, and yet withall a mercifull Prince: Consess them to God with godly Sorrow: Supplicate for Pardon with humbled Souls: Sprinkle your Consciences with the Bloud of Christ by the hand of Faith: and Resolve to leave your Wanderings, and to follow Christ. And then, and not till then, you shall have Peace with God: which he grant for his Son's sake, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE

THE

## COMFORT

OF THE

# Divine Presence.

Part I.

## The Sixth SERMON.

P S A L M li. 11.

Cast me not away from thy Presence; and take
not thy Holy Spirit from me.

F all the Holy Patriarchs, whose ways are recorded in the Old Testament, there is none, of whose Acts we have more relation remaining to us for our Imitation, or our Caution, then we have of David's. In the constant course of his Actions he was so obedient to God, that God gave this Testimony to him, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill my will, Act. 13. 22. And yet he sinned so soully in the matter of Uriab, that he is stigmatized by the Prophet Nathan, sent by God to reprove him sharply for it, as

one that gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord, to blaspheme, 2 Sam. 12. 14. He that in the time of his Persecution had shewed much Constancy in his Obedience to God, and Adherence to him; in the time of his Prosperity and greatest Tranquillity shewed his Instability, so as to become a Reproach to the Prosession of his God.

Whence it came to pass, that as in his Afflictions he made many Pfalms of Exultation in God, and Exaltation of his Name, so as to gain the Elogy of the sweet Singer of Israel; so by reason of his great Fall in defiling Bathsheba, he is fain to mourn as a Dove, to change his tune, to fing Lamentation, to bewail his Transgreffions, and to cry Peccavi in this Penitential Pfalm, composed (as the Title shews) by reason of his Fall into those horrid Evils of Adultery and Murther. For expiating of which, though the Law yielded no Sacrifice, yet the Grace of God he knew did: and therefore he prays instantly, both for Pardon of what he had done. and for preventing Grace against future Relapses, as the words of my Text import; Cast me not away from thy Presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Holiness, from me.

In which words he deprecates two Evils as most pernicious: 1. The Ejection out of God's Presence; 2. The

Loss of his Holy Spirit.

Concerning these, it may be enquired, how he could pray against that which elsewhere he seems to reckon as not fecible, when he saith, Whither shall I goe from thy Spirit? or whither shall I see from thy Presence? Psal. 139. 7. which intimates as if there were no escaping God's Spirit, or avoiding God's Presence: And therefore it was in vain for him to petition God against that which could not be effected, though God should goe about it.

To which I answer, That it is true, that God's entitative Presence is every-where, and therefore there could not be a Casting him out of it, nor could he goe any whither where he might hide himself, or not have the Spirit of God to find him out, and to reach him: his Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotency make such an Exclusion or Subtraction unimaginable.

But there is a Presence of Favour, of Assistance, of Protection, an having of the Spirit for Guidance, Comfort, and Ability for operation, (here meant,) which a person may be excluded from, and destitute of: such as Cain dreaded, when he said, My Punishment is greater then I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy Face shall I be hid. And Cain went out from the Presence of the Lord, Gen. 4. 13, 14, 16. That is, he was deprived of the light of God's Countenance; filled with Horrour in his spirit, out of the conscience of his unpardoned unnatural Murther of his Brother: God respected not his Offering, admitted him not to any Communion with himself, let the infernall Spirits haunt him, delivered him into the hands of the Devil.

And this most horrible estate the Psalmist doth here deprecate; since the conscience of his Guilt made

him sensible that he might justly expect it.

Now to begin with the First Petition: whence these Points are deducible.

1. That God's Presence of Grace is most desi-

2. That the committing of great and enormous Sins

doth endanger the Privation of it.

3. That a Penitent Sinner begs earnestly against the Loss of it, as his greatest Calamity; and prays for the Continuance of it, as his chiefest Good. Dominus tecum, & cum spiritu tuo, The Lord be with thee, and N with

with thy spirit, are the most important Prayers in our Christian Liturgy.

To begin with the first of these.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That God's Presence of Grace is most desirable.

How defirable the Prefence of God's Favour is to men, may appear by that Dialogue between God and Moses, which we meet with Exod. 33. 14, 15. wherein, after God had made that terrible Commination, of coming up into the midst of the people of Israel in a moment to consume them, because of their great Provocation of him in making the Golden Calf, and not to goe up with them, vers. 3, 5. and Moses, vers. 12, 13. had instantly made Supplication for God's Guidance in that great Expedition which he put him upon, of bringing the people of Ifrael into the Land of Canaan; the Lord tells him, that his Presence should goe with him, and he would give him rest. Moses replies to God, If thy Presence goe not with us, carry us not up hence. And gives this. reason, verf. 16. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy fight? is it not in that thou goest with us?

From which passage may be discerned how much Moses valued God's Presence, as that without which he counted all his Undertakings as vain; that he could not effect any thing prosperously, not subdue Enemies, nor rule that people, nor successively accomplish any undertaking: But on the other side, with God's Presence he doubted not but that he should bring to pass that great Business, and all other Designs which he should be put upon, if God did vouchsase it to him.

The same is true in our Spirituall Voiage towards Heaven, and our Christian Warfare. The Presence of God is

All in all; without God's Presence we can doe nothing: though we should have all the furniture of wit, strength, wealth, and the affishence of men; Vet flould we not be able to goe one step forward in the way to Happiness: we of our selves should not be sufficient to think any thing as of our selves, for all our Sufficiency is of God, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Yea our Adversary the Devil would easily devour us, if the Lord should depart from us. On the other fide, If God be for us, who can be against us? Neither life, nor death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall prevail against us. The auxiliary force of God's Presence makes a Believer, in Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, to be more then a Conquerour, even to triumph and to glory in the Lord; as knowing that his Riches exceed Creefus his wealth, his Glory Solomon's glory; and that he may truly fay, without Thra-Sonicall vaunting, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, All are mine, I being Christ's, and Christ God's, I Cor. 3. 22, 23.

Thus did the Psalmist express his apprehensions of the benefit of God's Presence in relation to his Safety, Comfort, and Happiness. That be restored his Soul, and led him in the paths of Righteonsness for his Name's sake. Yea, though he did walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he would fear no evil: for God was with him, his Rod and his Staff did comfort him, Psal. 23. 3,4. That his Goodness and Mercy should follow him all the days of his life, vers. 6. That he would shew him the path of Life: in his Presence was sulness of Joy, at his right hand

Pleasures for evermore, Pfal. 16. 11.

As to be near such a King as Solomon, was counted so great a Happiness, that the blessedness of Solomon's

Courtiers was magnified with admiration by the Queen of Sheha: fo much more bleffed are they that are acquainted with God, and are near to him. In his Favour is their life. Pfal. 20.5. The light of his Countenance

is better then life it felf.

Man being Animal sociabile, a sociable Living creature, needs Society: it is most joyous for him to be with them whom he loves, and who love him, and can help him. But such is none now in comparison of God. and therefore no Company (to a Holy heart) like to God's. David's Soul thirfted for God, panted after him. to come and appear before him. But his Tears were his meat day and night in his absence from God; and it was as a Sword in his bones to be reproached with this demand. Where is the God? When God hid his face. be was troubled. Which comes to pass by our departing from God: and that brings me to the

#### H. OBSERVATION.

That the committing of great and enormous Sins en-

dangers the Privation of God's Presences

It is true, that God sometimes, to try his most upright Servants, doth withdraw from them the light of his Countenance; not out of Indignation against them. for any great Transgression committed by them. Thus he dealt with Job, when he exercised his Patience: which made him expolulate the matter with God, 70b 13.24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine Enemy? vers.26. For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the Iniquities of my youth. And Heman the Exrabite, Pfal. 88. 14. Lord, why castest thou off my Soul ? why hidest thou thy Face from me ? But this casting off and hiding God's Face is but for a time, and not in wrath, but like a Father's dealing dealing with his Child, when he for a little while fequesters himself, to make experiment of his Child's Affection, and to excite him thereby to feek him the more

earnestly.

Nevertheless even this also tends to bring them to the acknowledgment of their Sins: therefore the Prophet Hofea (5.15.) brings in God thus faving, I will goe away and return to my place, till they acknowledge their Offence, and seek my Face: in their Affliction they will seek me early. Even Job wanted God's Presence, till he confessed himself vile, and repented, abborring himself

in dust and ashes, Job 42. 6.

But there is a more direfull Casting out of God's Presence with utter Forsaking, so as to cast a people or person out of his sight for ever; by leaving them to be a Prey to those who waste and oppress them: as when he threatned, Jerem. 7. 15. to cast the Jews out of his light, as he had cast out all their brethren, the whole feed of Ephrain: which he accomplished in the Babylonish Captivity, as it is Ferem. 52. 3. Through the Anger of the Lord it came to pass in Terusalem and Judah. that God cast them out of his Presence; especially becanse of all the Provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withall, 2 King. 23. 26. And indeed, though Manasseh, repenting, was not utterly and for ever cast out of God's Presence; yet by reason of the hainousness of his Sins, the Lord brought upon him and his people the Captains of the hoast of the King of Affria, which took him among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon, 2 Chron. 33. 11.

And David himself, when he had by his great Transgressions provoked the Lord to Anger in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, found God's favourable Presence so removed from him, that in his House he suffered by his Children great Calamities, which were inflicted by

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God to shew his Indignation: so that though he were not Filius Ira, a Child of Wrath, cast away with utter Dereliction as a Reprobate; yet he was Filius sub Ira, a Child under Wrath for that present, which made him dread his Danger, and to be thus importunate with

God, not to cast him out of his Presence.

And indeed in case of great Sins committed presumptuously against Warning, or Conscience enlightned, and continued in with Impenitency, it is inconsistent with God's Holiness and Honour to afford his Presence; it being contrary to his Nature and Glory to countenance Evil, who is not a God that bath pleasure in Wickedness, neither shall Evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of Iniquity, Psal. 5. 4, 5. He is of purer eyes then to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity, Hab. 1. 13.

As it is with a gallant Prince, who cannot brook a base Coward; or a neat and cleanly Nobleman, who cannot endure in his company a sordid and nasty Sloven, but will thrust or keep such out of his presence: so it is with God. When a Man or Nation have defiled themselves with such odious Iniquities as God abhors, till they be washed with true Repentance, and new cloathed by putting on the Lord Jesus, there is no hope of finding God ready to admit them near to him.

Wherefore

#### III. OBSERVATION.

Penitent Sinners (such as David was) do beg earnestly against the Loss of God's Presence, as their greatest Calamity; and pray for its Continuance, as their chiefest Happiness.

The Holy Writings are full of such Petitions as these. Let my fentence come forth from thy presence, Pfal. 17.2.

Make

Make thy Face to shine upon thy servant, Psal. 31. 16. Forfake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me, Pfal. 38. 21. Awake, why fleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou the face ? Pfal. 44. 23, 24. Return for thy fervants fake, Ifa. 62. 17. Take away all Iniquity, and receive us gracionly. Hof. 14. 2. As it is with a Child who miffeth his Father, he cries after him, till he appears to him; or as a Traveller that is out of his way, and knoweth not what way to take, nor what may become of him, calls for his Guide to direct, for his Company to help him: So it is with a Repenting person, who hath wandered out of his way; he is sensible that he hath done foolishly in leaving God's way, fears lest he shall become a prey to Satan, finds the want of God's Guidance, the need of his Affistence: hereupon he cries aloud to God not to leave him; he wraftleth with God. as Jacob did when he feared his Brother Esau's hostile approach, so as not to let bim goe untill he bless him; he weeps and makes Supplication, till he becomes an Ifaac, one that prevails with God; his Eye trickleth down and ceaseth not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and behold from Heaven; he bewails his turning afide into crooked paths, begs to be led into the way everlafting; and to that end refolves to hold close to God for the time to come, and to keep his way, left he (by Recidivation and Relapse) drive away God for ever. For which purpose he begs God not to take away his Holy Spirit from him, as being his best Guide and Guard in his Pilgrimage on Earth. Which leads me to the confideration of the Second Petition in my Text: but at prefent, time will not permit me to handle it. Of what hath been faid give me leave to make some Application.

#### APPLICATION.

You that have fallen into any such gross Transgrefsion as David's was, remember to imitate him in his
Return to God. As his Sin was very great, so this
Penitentiall Psalm shews his Sorrow after God was very
conspicuous, working Repentance not to be repented
of, 2 Cor. 7.10. What the Apostle said of the Corinthians,
(guilty of Indulgence to the Incestuous person,) For
behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you, yea what Clearing of your selves, yea what Indignation, yea what Fear,
yea what vehement Desire, yea what Zeal, yea what Revenge: in all things ye have approved your selves to be clear
in this matter; the same wastrue of David, and ought
to be verified in every one of you, chiefly in these
things.

I. To be sensible of the great danger of the Loss of God's Presence; to know and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that you have for saken the Lord your God, and that his Fear was not in you; when either by Wantonness, or Intemperance, or Profaneness, or Unrighteousness, or any other kind of Leudness, though committed in secret from the eyes of man, ye did Evil in God's sight, and rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit, so that he was turned away from you, became your Enemy, fought against you, and left you to be insnared by the Devil, and to be led captive by him according to his

will, 2 Tim. 2. 26.

Oh this is a thing you should mourn for as one mourneth for his onely Son, and be in bitterness for his absence as one that is in bitterness for his sirst-born.

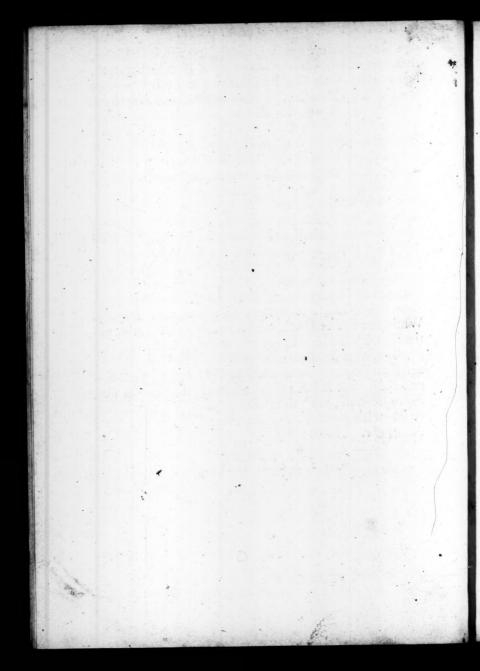
2. For the time to come, that with the spirit of Grace and Supplication you instantly press God to vouchsafe

you his preferving, guiding, comforting, aiding Prefence, that you may not be overcome by a like Temptation, nor wander from God by Errour, nor by Infirmity of your flesh yield to such Motions in you, or Solicitations of others, as may overcome you, and prevail upon you to goe aftray from God, and leave him, who is your Shepherd, lest the Wolf of Hell catch you, and tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.

Oh, what-ever you doe, watch, and pray that God may lead you in the paths of Righteousness for his Name's Sake. And what-ever Bait or Suggestion may be set before you, yet remember that which Toseph thought on when he was enticed to Leudness by his Mistris, How shall I doe this great Wickedness, and sin against God?

Oh, set God alwaies before you, who being at your right hand, you shall not be moved. It will be your everlasting Comfort in life and death, that you can fay, I was upright before God, and kept my self from mine Iniquity. While you'live on Earth, walk humbly, obediently, patiently with God. Doe as Enoch did, who had this testimony, that he so walked with God as to please him: and then you may be affured, not with standing your former Falls, yet at last to be translated (if not as he was, not to see death, yet) so as not to abide in death, but to be with your Father for ever. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.



#### THE

## HEAVENLY GIFT.

Part II.

## The Seventh SERMON.

## PSALM li. II. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

In this Penitentiall Psalm of David, wherein he applieth himself to God for the recovery of his Favour, after his great Fall in the matter of Uriah, as he sincerely confesseth his Sin, and humbly beggeth Pardon, so he doth earnestly deprecate God's Dereliction of him, as being the most sad presage of his everlasting Perdition; and the taking away his Holy Spirit from him, as the inlet to Satan's possession of him, and so the forerunner of his extreme Ruine.

I have heretofore considered his Petition against Ejection out of God's Presence; the regaining of which is a most desirable thing to a Penitent Sinner; and though it be forseited by Sin, yet is it recoverable by humble and earnest Supplication. It now remains that I consider the other Prayer in my Text, against the Privation of God's Spirit, in these words, And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

For explication whereof, it is requisite that it be

shewed, 1. What is meant by the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God's Holiness, which he feared might be taken from

bim: 2. How it is taken away from a person.

1. The term Spirit is meant sometimes of God the Father, as Joh. 4. 24. where it is faid that God is a Spirit: fometimes of the Son, as 2 Cor. 3. 17. where it is faid, The Lord is that Spirit: and sometimes of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity, as 1 Joh. 5.6. where it is said, It is the Spirit that beareth witness; who is termed the Holy Ghost, or Spirit, and is all one with the Spirit of his Holiness in my Text. Now he is so termed in opposition to the unclean Spirit, Matth. 12. 43. or evil Spirit, and Spirit of Devils, which are in some men, as the Holy Spirit is in others. For as the Heathens imagined that every man had his good Genius or his bad, his good or bad Angel: fo the Holy Scripture expresseth the Motions of men to be from the Spirit of God's Holiness, in them who are sanctified; and from Satan, in them who are unholy, as in Cain and Fudas.

Now the Spirit of God is sometimes spoke of as God's Instrument by which he works in the works of Creation. Psal. 104. 30. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the Earth. Job 33. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. When God bringeth any great thing to pass, he doth it by his Spirit. Zech. 4. 6. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit. That which is in Matth. 12.28. If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, is in Luk. 11. 20. If I with the singer of God cast out Devils: whence it appears, that the Spirit of God is Digitus Dei, God's Hand or Finger, whereby he works. But especially the works God doeth in and for the Saints are ascribed to the Spirit of God. All these things worketh that one and the self-same

Spirit, dividing to every man severally even as he will, 1 Cor. 12. 11. All those precious Qualities and Operations whereby we please God are termed Fruits of

the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22, 23.

2. This helps us to understand how the Holy Spirit may be taken from a person; to wit, by withdrawing from him those Operations of the Holy Spirit which are amiable to God, or comfortable to us. Now in this Petition it is to be considered, that notwithstanding David's Sins, he was not utterly bereft of God's Spirit: for in this Pfalm, his humble Confession, his ardent Supplication, shew that there was some fire of God's Spirit remaining in him, all the sparks were not gone out. Yet he felt so little of the Vigour and Consolation of the Spirit, that he feared its utter Extinction. And because this would leave him in utter Darkness, therefore he is importunate with God, that he would not take his Holy Spirit from him; but, as it is in the next verse, restore unto him the joy of his Salvation, and uphold him with his free Spirit.

The Petition thus opened yields us these Observa-

tions.

1. That the having of God's Spirit in us, and with us, is the most beneficial Gift which God gives to a Repenting Sinner.

2. That great Transgressions endanger the Loss of

God's Spirit.

3. That a Repenting Sinner is an earnest Suitour to God for the Continuance of it to him.

Of these in their order.

### I. OBSERVATION.

That God's Spirit is the most beneficial Gift that God bestows on a Repenting Sinner.

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This

This is manifest from the words of Christ, Luk. 11. 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Which shews that the Gift of the Holy Spirit is a greater Gift, and far better, then that which earthly Parents give to their Children, as bodily Food, and the like: and that God, in giving his Holy Spirit to those that ask him. shews an Affection far exceeding that which Parents have for their Children, when they supply them with Corporall sustenance. Adde hereunto, that the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 14. in his Benediction of the Corinthians. prays thus for them, The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, Amen. Whereby it is manifest, that the Communion of the Holy Spirit is ranked among the best things he could beg for that people, to wit, the Grace of Christ, and the Love of God.

Nor is this without reason: for the Spirit of God removes all that Evil which is odious to God, and noisome to our selves; it washes away that Filthiness of steps and spirit which is loathsome to God; it cures that Blindness of Mind, that Hardness of Heart, that Perverseness of Soul, that Impotency of Faculties, which make us unable to doe any thing that may please God, or rectify our own Actions. It is this clean Water which, being sprinkled on us by God, makes us clean in his eyes, so as to cleanse us from all our Filthiness and all our Evils. It is that, by giving of which, we have a new heart, and a new spirit is put within us: God takes away the stony heart out of our self, and gives us an heart of selfs, which causeth us to walk in God's Statutes, and to keep his Judgments, and doe

them, Ezek. 11. 19, 20.

In whom the Spirit of God dwells not, there is a Spirit

Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they do not hear: even the Gospel is hid to them; the God of this world blinds their minds, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image God, should shine unto them: they are held in the Snare of the Devil, and are taken captive by him at his will. An evil Spirit possesses them, so that they want the Consolations of God, the Peace which passeth understanding, which guards the minds of them that believe through Christ Jesus: they are filled with Horrour of Conscience, are under the spirit of Bondage: they sow to the

Flesh, and of the Flesh reap Corruption.

On the other fide, where the Spirit of God inhabits, it renews a man in the spirit of his mind, so that he knows the things that are freely given him of God; spiritually discerns the hidden wisedom of God in a mystery, which God hath ordained before the world to our glory; even those things which eye hath not feen, nor ear heard, nor have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Even to Babes are these things revealed by God's Spirit, which the Princes of the world knew not, but they were hid from the wife and prudent, Matth. 11. 25. Whence it is, that they are made the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshly Tables of the Heart: with open face beholding, as in a glass, the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3.3, 18. By which means they are made the Temple of God, in that the Spirit of God dwelleth in them, verf. 16. and holy unto God, an babitation of God through the Spirit: they are joyned to the Lord, one Spirit with him; new Creatures in Christ, and conformed to him. Whence it is that Sin bath not dominion over them, nor the Wicked one toucheth them.

them. They are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein they were held; that they might bring forth fruit unto God; serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the Letter. For though the Letter of the Law killeth, being the ministration of Condemnation; yet the Spirit giveth Life, being the ministration of Righteousness, which exceeds in glory. And consequently, they have liberty by the Spirit of God; are beautified by it, so as that Christ is formed in them. They live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit is to them life and peace. They have aecess by one Spirit unto the Father. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, Abba Father. The Spirit it felf beareth witness with their fbirit, that they are the Children of God: and if Children, then Heirs, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ; that suffering with him, they may be glorified together. They are led by the Spirit; sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit reap life everlasting; through the Spirit, wait for the hope of Righteousness which is by Faith.

In a word, that Life, that Holiness, that Beauty, that Liberty, that Joy, that Hope, that Fruit which a Christian hath from Christ, is communicated by the Spirit; and that Glory of Soul and Body which is expected hereafter, that Quietness and Rest in life and death which is desirable, is from the Spirit of God. man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's: But if Christ be in us, the Body is dead, because of Sin; but the Spirit is life, because of Righteonsness. And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in

us, Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11.

So that I may fafely infer from this enumeration of Benefits, even the most precious Riches that a Spirit

is capable of, that the Gift of God's Spirit to a man is the greatest Commodity, the Jewel of Heaven. What Solomon saith of Wisedom, is true of God's Spirit: It is a Gift more precious then Rubies, and all the things we can desire are not to be compared to it. And therefore the Loss of it is the greatest Loss. Which brings me to the Enquiry what endangers the Privation of it; and that was afferted, in the Second Proposition, to be great Transgressions.

#### II. OBSERVATION.

That great Transgressions endanger the Loss of God's Spirit.

This is manifest from David's Petition, in that by reason of his Sins he was afraid of its Los, and therefore begs the Continuance of it, notwithstanding his

foul Trespasses.

It is, I confess, a great Dispute, Whether a person once regenerated by the Spirit, washed, sandified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, can totally and finally lose its Continuance with him. I will not meddle with that Point: But this is out of question, That some Gifts of the Spirit may be lost; else the Apostle, I Thess. 5. 19. would not have premonished the Thessalonians that they should not quench the Spirit. Such Gifts of the Spirit as are for others good, to which the Salvation of a person is not promised, may undoubtedly be totally lost by great Transgressions. So Saul lost the Royal Magnanimity and other Princely Endowments which he had before, by sparing Agag, and by usurping the Priestly Office in offering Sacrifice. Judas lost the Gift of Healing which he had with the rest of the Apostles, and other Abilities to preach the Gospell, by his traitourous

tourous Selling of his Master: he fell from the Apostle-ship and Ministry by his Transgression. Nor is it denied, but that some who were once enlightned, and had tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, might fall away, and not be renewed again by Repentance; that they might crucisse the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; that they might tread under foot the Son of God, and count the Bloud of the Covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unhaly thing, and doe despite to the Spirit of grace, Heb.

6. 4, 5, 6. and 10. 29.

Yea, those of whom God gave testimony, that they did that which was right in the eyes of God, as did David; yet even they fell so foully, as that they lost the Fruits and Comforts of the Spirit, so as not to regain them in that degree they once had them. Of Asa it is faid, that his Heart was perfect with the Lord all his days, I King. 15. 14. and yet he put the Seer in prifon, being in a rage with him for reproving his Relying on the King of Syria, 2 Chron. 16. 7, 10. and even in his Disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, vers. 12. And Hezekiah, though he malked before God in truth and with a perfect Heart, and did that which was good in his fight; yet when God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart, he rendred not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his Heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. 32.25, 31.

Certain it is, by David's and other Holy mens example, that God doth sometimes leave men to themselves for a time, so as to fall into such Sins as deprive them of the Joy of God's Salvation, and the establishing virtue of God's Spirit; so as not to be so active and constant in the exercise of Godliness as formerly; at least for a time: else why doth David pray, in the

next

next verse to my Text, Restore unto me the for of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit? And however the event be, yet there is great danger of an utter Loss of the Spirit of God, not onely in respect of its Comforts and Motions, but also of its inexistence and quickening virtue, when men are so overcome by Lust as Solomon and David, or Fear as Peter, or

other Temptations, to fin fo foully as they did.

The Reason whereof is, because such Sins do grieve and vex the Holy Spirit. For though the Spirit of God be not subject to humane Passions; yet the Holy Scripture, as it ascribes Repentance and some other Affections of men to God, so doth it attribute Grief to the Holy Spirit, Eph. 4. 30. where it minds us that We grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption, in respect of the effect that Grief hath in man, which makes him withdraw from that which grieves him. And so saith the Book intituled the Wisedom of Solomon, Chap. 1: 4, 5. For into a malicious Soul Wisedom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject to Sin. For the holy Spirit of discipline will fly deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide where Unrighteon (ness cometh in. Contraria se invicem expellunt: There is a Contrariety between God's Spirit of Holiness, and man's spirit that loves or yields to Unholiness; and therefore they confist not together. And God doth also justly deprive persons of that great Cift of his Spirit, when they refift it, when they vex it, so as to make it become their Enemy: as Princes take away their Favours and Offices and Honours which they have conferred, when they are contemned, and abused against them. And therefore a Penitent Sinner, being fenfible of his Danger, deprecates the ablation of God's Spirit, though deserved by his Sin, as David in my Text, III. OBwhich is the P 2

## III. OBSERVATION.

That a Repenting Sinner is an earnest Suitour to God

for the Continuance of his Spirit to him.

It is the dolefull Expostulation of the people of God, Isa. 63. 17. who had rebelled, and vexed God's Spirit, so as to make him their Enemy, vers. 10. when they repented, and discerned their Errour, and begged his Return, O Lord, why hast thou made us to erre from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy Fear? return for thy servants sake. They at last find the miss of God's Spirit, as that which yielded them the greatest Sasety and chiefest Happiness. They find that they, by their not cherishing God's Spirit, but unkind usage, have driven away their best Friend. They see that, by their Security, they have let in their greatest Enemy.

In a word, when a Sinner hath found his Misery by acting that Sin which forseits his interest in the Guidance and Assistence of God's Spirit, he bewails it, and sears lest an evil Spirit should possess him, and bring with it seven more unclean spirits, worse then it self, when his house is empty, swept, and garnished, and dwell in him, and so his end be worse then his beginning; as it is Matth. 12.44, 45. And therefore he begs for the Continuance of God's Spirit, lest the unclean Spirit posses him, as it did Saul. David therefore so earnestly here deprecates the Loss of the Holy Spirit, as remembring what besell his Predecessour Saul: which all Penitent Sinners should likewise dread.

#### APPLICATION.

Now then, it concerns us all to prize the Presence and Virtue of God's Spirit in us, as the great Gift of Heaven; Heaven; and to take heed how we forfeit it by our Sins: which if we have done, let us by Repentance bewail our Forfeiture of it, and beg of God the Continuance of it, notwithstanding our desert to be deprived of it.

We count the Titles and Ensigns of the Favour of a King, the Robes and Proclamations by which he honours a Subject, of great worth. Joseph's and Mordecai's riding and cloathing by the Kings of Egypt and Persia were highly accounted of; and the Loss of such Advancement was terrible to Haman and others: and Fear of like Disgrace makes men beg that they may not be deprived of them.

The having of God's Spirit is as the Seal of God, as a Robe or Diadem, as the Enlign of the Order of the King of Heaven, as that which affures our instatement in the rank of Nobles, which are as Angels before

God.

Oh let us then value it far above all the Ensigns of Favour and Honour by which the greatest Kings on earth testifie their respect to their Favourites. Let us take heed of rebelling, and vexing the Holy Spirit of God, lest he become our Enemy, and fight against us. If we have by Sin endangered our Loss of it, let us beg earnestly its Restitution: and take heed of Security and Remissness in sowing to the Spirit, of Barrenness and Unstruitfulness in bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit; lest we lose its Comforts and Operations, and our case be like Saul's, that the Spirit of God depart from us, and an evil Spirit from the Lord possess us for ever.

It is a very fad thing, that any, in mockery and scorn, should deride the work of God's Spirit, especially in fervent Prayer; that any should counterfeit it; that any should ascribe that to God's Spirit, which is but

their own Fancy. Such Profaneness and Hypocrisie let us take heed of: such Fanaticism is justly recompensed by a being possessed with Satan, in stead of-

God's Spirit.

But however we be free from these Evils, let us not content our selves without the seeling and experiment of the Guidance of God's Holy Spirit by the Fruits of it, mentioned Gal. 5. 22, 23. by working out our Salvation with sear and trembling: let us beware that a spirit of Slumber come not upon us; that we do not by any sinfull Lust provoke the Spirit to leave us. And if we have endangered our Loss of it, Oh let us not give rest to our selves, till by humbling our selves for our Sins, and by servent Prayers, we recover its inhabitation, its supporting and comforting Presence, which will stand us in greatest stead in life and death. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE

THE

# POWER

True Integrity.

Part I.

## The Eighth SERMON.

PROVERBS XVIII. 14.

The Spirit of a man will sustain his Instrmity: but a wounded Spirit who can bear?

Twas the immense Munissence of the Divine Goodness to his people the Jews, that he not onely gave them the Treasures of Egypt, but also the Riches of Heaven, in such holy Precepts as he vouchfased not to other Nations: so that in respect of true Wisedom they might have exceeded the Egyptians or Greeks, if they had applied their minds to observe them.

It was not altogether undeservedly, that Pythagoras his Poem was said to contain Golden Verses; that others of the Greek Poets and Philosophers were for their

their Sentences and Apophthegms magnified as wife above the common fort of men: But none of them was comparable to Solomon; nor any of their Sayings equal to his Proverbs; amongst which, this which I have pitched upon is very remarkable, The Spirit of a man, &c.

The former part of which presupposeth Man obnoxious to Infirmities: which indeed all Experience proves true. He hath Infirmities of Body: in the outward Senses many Defects, in the other Faculties many Imperfections. Not onely his Eyes are dim, his Ears deaf, his Taft, Feeling, Smelling, decay: but also his Memory fails, his Apprehension is shallow, his Invention dull: the whole Man is fickly, withering, and inclining to Corruption. He hath worse Infirmities of Soul: Ignorance of God, of his Will; proneness to yield to Seducements and Temptations of Satan; Unteachableness, and Untractableness; Passionateness. Inconstancy, Prevalency of Lusts: by reason of which God faid of the Jews, Ezek. 16.30. How weak is thine Heart, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman? Both these sorts may be well here meant; Sickness and Sorrows, Errours and Fears: and both are supposed to be as Burthens which depress a man. Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop, Prov. 12. 25. Age and Sickness cause the Keepers of the bouse to tremble, and the strong men to bow themselves. Fear to be in the way, the Grashopper to be a burthen. Defire to fail, the silver Chord to be loosed, the golden Bowl to be broken, the Pitcher to be broken at the Fountain, the Wheel to be broken at the Ciftern; as Solomon poetically describes that State, Eccles. 12. 3,4,5,6. These and innumerable more Weaknesses are incident to Man: whereof some are natural, common to all; some adventitious, by our own Folly, Mens Injuriousness, the Creature's Harmfulness, God's just Judgments which happen

that

happen to men. Yet all these the Spirit of a man will sustain.

By the Spirit is no doubt meant the Soul of man, with its vital Faculties, his Reason, Will, and Affections; of which the Apostle speaks I Cor. 2. II. For what man hath known the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man which is in him? But then it must be understood of the Spirit of a man in its Rectitude and Integrity, opposite to a wounded Spirit, as the Antithesis in the latter part of the verse shews.

This Rectitude or Integrity of the Spirit confifts,

1. In the right use of Reason, which is indeed the Sinews of the Spirit. The less there is of Reason, the more is the imbecillity of the Spirit: and the weaker the Mind, the less is the Patience. Children can bear nothing: upon every Lash, every motion of a Rod, presently they cry; an ugly Vizor, any strange Noise or unexpected Accident affrights them. So it is with weak-spirited persons; they are ready to saint at every Threat, every Frown of a Superiour: they think every Symptom of a Disease presageth Death, and presently the Physician must be fetcht; every Rumour of War puts them to a stand what to doe, where to be; every Loss is as if they were undone; every Dissiculty apprehended is as a Lion in the way.

When Gideon bids Jether his first-born, up and slay Zeba and Zalmunna; though they were in his hands, under his feet, yet the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth, Judg. 8. 20. Rise thou, said they then to Gideon, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. As is the man's Reason and Understanding, so is his Courage and Fortitude of Spirit. Mens cujusque is est quisque. It is not the height of the Stature, nor the bigness of the Bone, nor the length of the Arm, nor the vigour of the Members,

that inable a person to bear or act. A little man with a lively Spirit can fight better then a Giant that is slow in motion, and dull in contrivance: a cunning Ulysses will overcome Difficulties, and bear Storms, better then

a lusty Ajax.

Necessitas fortiter ferre docet, Consuetudo facilé. Men that have much Wit to find ways of evalion, Skill to apply themselves to persons and times, to foresee Means and Events, will wind themselves out of Troubles; when a man of a rude and boisterous Spirit, by his felf-vexing, his fretfulness and fuming, doth but hamper himself the more, like the Bird that flutters in the Net. Custome also makes many a Disease born without Disquietness, many a dangerous Storm adventured through without Fear. The more Experience men have of overcoming Afflictions, the more are they armed against them. Any way whereby Reason is confirmed, Infirmities are abated. The Forelight of Evils approaching makes them the less formidable. Those Darts pierce leaft, which are foreseen best. Reason is indeed a Buckler that bears off many Blows, which would cut a Fool to the heart. The Argument of the Apostle is rational, I Cor. 10. 13. There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to men, and therefore should be born. Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes, Nemo recusat, is Reason in the Poet.

How admirable were the Resolutions, how constant were the Actings of spirit in Stoicks, in bearing their Sufferings by the help of Philosophy? Pains of the Stone, Torture of the Rack, were stoutly born without a Groan, upon such Apprehensions as these: This Evil reacheth not Me, but my Sheath; what is common to me with Beasts, not that which is mine. The Writings of Seneca, Epistetus, Suetonius, and others, are full to this purpose: so are the Relations of the

Lives

Lives of Philosophers. Certain it is, that for the fustaining of humane Evils, Prudence is much availing. That of Solomon is true of it, Eccles. 7. 19. Wisedom strengtheneth the wise, more then ten mighty men which are in

the City.

2. But then, 2<sup>19</sup>, Reason is much more strong, when there is with it a Breast-plate of Righteousness, a Conscience of Uprightness. This is indeed Armour of proof, such as no Infirmities, no sad Accidents can penetrate. Then is the Spirit of a Man whole and sound, able to bear its Burthens of Afflictions and Injuries, when he is Integer vitæ, Scelerisque purus, of an innocent Life, and unspotted Conscience. Yea, such hath been the height of Considence in some moral Heathens, such their Heroick Gallantry, that they have provoked the most barbarous Tyrants to doe their worst; have gloriously triumphed in the severest Tortures; have vaunted of an undaunted mind, though Heaven and Earth should be tumbled together. Si fractus illabatur Orbis, Impavidum ferient Ruinæ.

What glorious talk have the Stoicks of their Vertues, as of themselves sufficient to make them happy under any Pressures? What sullen (if not well-composed) Deportment of Spirit have some of them shewed under Racks, Strappado's, and such like Engines of Cruelty? What Euthymy or Tranquillity of mind have they had in Sicknesses, yea in Death, when (Conscientia reste factorum) the consciousness of their well-doing, specially for their Country, hath animated them, like strong

Wine which chears the heart?

Holy Believers have (if not with so daring a Spirit, yet with a calmer and more gentle Submission to the Will of God) held up their heads under the greatest Rebukes of God's Hand, or Satan's Malice, when they have appealed to God concerning their Sincerity in

their Obedience to God's Will. When Hezekiah was sick unto death, and Isaiah the Prophet, the Son of Amoz, came unto him, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thoushalt die, and not live; he turned his face towards the Wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, Isa. 38. 1, 2, 3. He was under a mortal Disease, with sense of killing Pain; had a sharp Message by the Prophet, which might cut him to the heart: yet this did not sink him, but that he held up, so as, in the Conscience of his Uprightness, to urge God to revoke his Sen-

tence, and lengthen his Life.

But of all the Instances of mere mortal mens enduring Afflictions, no Example is like that transcendent Mirrour of Patience, holy Job; for, notwithstanding all the Adversities wherewith Satan had laden him notwithstanding the Provocation of his froward Wife. notwithstanding the injurious Criminations of his evilfurmizing Friends, and the croß Arguings wherewith they a long while baited him, yet he stood firm, fell not into any kind of Dejectedness of mind, or Despair of a good iffue out of his Temptations; though he fwam in rough waters against the stream, yet he kept up his head. The knowledge of his Purity, the affurance of his Witness in heaven, supported him with strength to undergoe all his Sores, to refute all his Adversaries, to conquer Satan, and to recover out of his Fluctuations, so as with greater advantage to get safe to Land, and to improve his Losses to a greater encrease of Favour and Acceptance with God, and temporal Prosperity.

Saint Paul, even when the malignant Jews came about him like Bees, and were prepared to sting him to

death,

death, before their malevolent Council, bore himself up with this Protestation, that be had lived in all good Conficience before God to that day, Act. 23.1. And this made him bold before Felix, when he could say in truth, Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience woid of offence towards God and towards men, Act. 24.16. When he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, before Felix the Governour, and Drusilla his Wife, which was a Jewess, he was without Fear; whereas Felix (whose Prisoner he was) trembled, wers. 25.

In a word, though he had Afflictions as much as any, yet in them all he rejoyced in this, that he had the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with slessly Wisedom, but by the Grace of God, he had his Conversation in the world; even at that time of his Trouble in which he was pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even

of life, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 12.

3. But there is yetathird Prop of the Spirit of a man, (besides right Reason, Prudence, and conscience of Innocency,) which doth enable it to sustain its Infirmities more steadily then the rest; and that is Faith in God through Jesus Christ, the chief part of the Divine Pan-

oply, or whole Armour of God.

And indeed Faith is the best Cordial to sustain the Spirit of a man in his Insirmities, be they never so great: by reason of which the same Aposthe could say of himself out of experience, 2.Cor. 4. 8, 9, 11. We are troubled on every side, jet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; pursecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed: always delivered to death for Jesus sake; yet the spirit of Faith, vers. 13. so upheld him, that, though the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, saying that Bonds and Assistance of Q. 3

those things did move him, Act. 20. 23, 24. He was so rooted and grounded in Faith, that (what-ever inward Decays he found, what-ever outward Storms beat upon him, yet) his Spirit stood firm with unmovable Resolution.

So it was with David at Ziklag: when his Fellow-fouldiers with himself had their City burnt, their Wives, Children and Goods carried away captive by the Amalekites, he was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his Sons and for his Daughters: yet he encouraged himself in the Lord his God, I Sam. 30. 6.

Faith then shewed its virtue; it strengthened his Heart, when the rest of the people in a womanish Sorrow fell a-weeping; and he betook himself to God, to inquire what was to be done: which was followed with success, that he recovered all that was lost.

But what speak I of these Insirmities, these Afflictions, which are nothing in comparison of what the Holy Martyrs bare through Faith? of whom we reade, Heb. 11. 35, 36, 37. that though they were tortured, yet they accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection: that when they had triall of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, of Bonds and Imprisonments, were stoned, were sawed asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, were destitute, afflicted, tormented, they could take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb. 10. 34. and so contentedly undergoe their Sufferings, as to take their Persecutours for their best Benefactours, and make the sweetest Melody in the most scorching Flames.

Innumerable Arguments Faith presents to the Spirit, from God's Presence, Appointment, Love, Power, Promises, which do invincibly arm a Believer in all

Perils,

Perils, in all Affaults, in all Oppressions, and make him invulnerable. Reason enables the Spirit of a man to sustain his Infirmities stoutly, a good Conscience comfortably, Faith triumphantly.

## APPLICATION.

And now give me leave to apply this to your use. You are often told (and if you were not, your Eyes and Ears and other Senses might inform you,) that Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. Which of you (unless beforted with vain Dreams, or drunken with sinfull Pleasures) but hath some foresight of imminent Dangers, some foretaste of future Sicknesses, and consequent Dissolution?

Is there any of you of so unshaken a Spirit, as that none of the things ye feel or fear do in the least move you? Why do you distill Hot waters, but to revive you in Faintings? why do you get Friends, but to help you in Troubles? why do you take Physick, but to help you in your Instrmities? why do you lay up, some Money, others Counsell, but to provide for times of Assistance and you any thing to enable your Spirit to sustain you in your Instrmities? I deny not but the Providence you use may be commendable: but if there be no more then that, it will be insufficient.

Some Infirmities may be remedied by natural Means; fome may be prevented by moral Prudence: but the Decumane waves of Sickness and Death, the thoughts of Sin's Guilt, and of Judgment to come, require a better Anchour then these to keep you up from being drowned, when the Conscience of the one, and the Fear of the other, beat upon the Vessel of your Spirit.

These Storms your Soul will not ride out, without the Conscience of a Reformed life, without the strong Cable.

The rower of orc. Sermon VIII.

Cable of a fast-holding Faith, the sure Anchour of a lively Hope in Christ. All the Trimming and Tackling besides, be it Wealth, Friends, Beauty, Bravery, yea, though it be a Form of Godlines, a strict Profession, with some measure of Sufferings for the Truth, will not keep you from Sinking, without an upright Heart, an unseigned Faith, a stable Hope in Jesus Christ. What-ever you doe then, let these never be wanting in the Closet of your Breasts: make not Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience; what-ever you lose, lose not them: yea, have them always in a readines, when any thing happens which may oppress you with Fear, or fink you with Sorrow.

Yea, forget not to exercise your Faith in God, your Hope in Christ, continually; that when you shall need them, you may not onely have them in habit, but also in use; not onely in the Root, but also in the Fruit.

Let your Life be a Life of Faith; your Breath be a Breathing of Hope in God: and then you may be affured, though your Body fall to the ground, your Spirit will mount upward to God that gave it. Which He grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

### THE

## WEAKNESSE

OF A

# Wounded Spirit

Part II.

## The Ninth SERMON.

PROV. xviij. 14. But a wounded Spirit who can bear?

HE Life of man on Earth consists of Action and Passion; of Doing his Work, and Bearing his Condition: And in both these there are innumerable Dissipation: And in both these there are innumerable Dissipation: So that it becomes a hard Task, either to doe what we ought, or to suffer as it becometh us. In Doing our Work we are commonly unskilfull and slothfull: In Bearing our Burthens we are querulous and unquiet. Man is born like a wild Asse's Colt, (saith Zophar, Job 11. 12.) If you drive him, he will not goe rightly: if you put Burthens on him, he will throw them off if he can; if he cannot remove them, he will wince and kick, especially when his Back is sore, his Mind galled: in which case this of Solomore.

Solomon is by much experience found true, A wounded Spirit who can bear? So we reade; but the Vulgar Latin hath it, Who shall be able to sustain the Spirit that is easy

to be angry?

But the word is more general, and signifies not so much the Passions of one to be born by another; in which case it is a truth, That the Wrath, Envy, Insolency of some mens Spirits is intolerable, as it is Prav. 27. 4. Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous: but mho is able to stand before Envy? But it is rather to be understood of the person's Spirit who is to bear; Who of all men can bear his own Spirit when it is wounded or broken? so as in that case his own Ability and all other mens is insufficient to bear up such a wounded Spirit. Such a man is dry slux a, as the Greek expressed it, one that hath but a little life in him. It is onely God that revives the Spirit of the humble, and

revives the Heart of the contrite ones, Ifa. 57. 15.

Now the Spirit is wounded or broken either by worldly Sorrows; By Sorrow of the heart the Spirit is broken, faith Solomon, Prov. 15. 13. and S. Paul, 2 Cor. 7. 10. Worldly Sorrow canseth death: or else it is broken by the fense of Guilt, and the fear of Wrath. In respect of which David complains, that his Banes were broken, Pfal. 51.8. and more fully Pfal. 38.2, &c. Thine Arrows flick fast in me, and thy Hand pressets me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine Anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my Sin. For mine Iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me to bear. My Wounds stink and are corrupt, through my foolishness. I am tronbled, I am bowed down greatly, I goe mourning all the day tong. For my Loyns are filled with a loathfome difease and there is no foundness in my sless. I am feeble and sore broken. I have roared by reason of the Disquietness of my heart.

In both these sorts of Wounds, Experience hath proved the Imbecillity of mens Spirits to bear them, or of any other man to keep them from falling, untill there appear ( Deus è machina ) Divine help from Heaven.

So that I am to demonstrate to you, That in the great Pressures of Spirit (either through worldly Afflictions, or by reason of the Conscience of Sin) no man is able to hold up himself from finking, nor can any other support him, besides God; with the Reason hereof: That God onely makes up the breach, and closes the Wounds

in the Spirit; and how he doeth it.

That worldly Croffes break mens Spirits, fo as that they are weary of their Lives, is evident in the instance of Ahitophel, who was counted fo wife a man, that his Counsel was reputed as if a man had inquired of the Oracle of God; yet barely because he saw his Counsell was not followed by Absalom, (God so over-ruling the heart of Absalom, that he hearkened to Hushai rather then to himself,) his Spirit could not bear this Disappointment of his Design, (to be the grand Minister of State under Absalom, ) but, in stead of diffembling his Grievance, he saddled his Ass, got him home to his City, put his house in order, hanged himself, died, and was buried in the Sepulehre of his Fathers, 2 Sam. 17. 23. Many more such Examples of men eminent in respect of Wifedome, Dignity, Power, Wealth, who upon fome unexpected Los, Fear, perhaps but the angry Looks of a Prince, the Expulsion from Court, or Deprivation of an Office, have been impatient of their Lives, and turned Executioners of themselves, may be found in Histories, or known by our own Experience.

And the Reason hereof is, from the extreme Folly that is in men, who lay so great a stress of their Happiness upon worldly things; that when they fail them,

their case seems deplorable, they have no Buttress to

keep up their Spirits.

How great a number are there, that trust in uncertain Riches, and not in the living God? And therefore when the Prop of their Wealth is gone, then all is gone with them; their Hearts are faint, and they east away their Life, as if it were an unsupportable Burthen to them.

How many are there that depend on the Prince's Favour, and make such account of Preserment by it, that all their study is to get and keep it, though with the loss of God's Favour? But that being changeable, and their Hopes thereupon frustrated, there is no Acquiescence in God's Will, but violent Impatience, till they have dispatcht themselves.

How many have so set their Affections on some particular person, (as Amnon on Tamar,) that they wax lean from day to day, because they cannot obtain their desire? Yea, the Inconstancy of their Mistress, the miss of the hoped Match, shortens their Lives, brings down their

heads with Sorrow to the Grave.

And it is just with God it should be so, that those things should be cursed to us, be as blasted Trees, from which we seek that Fruit, that Content, and those Enjoyments, which alone are to be had in God's Favour. When our Hearts wander after some Creature, and make it as our God, love it, trust in it, in stead of God himself; he will not brook it, but remove it, or make it our Vexation; make it become our Perdition, which was the means of our Corruption.

This is much more true, when the Spirit is wounded by the Conscience of Sin against God. In the former, there is desect of Love to God; in this, express Enmity against him; and therefore it is more intolerable. Cain's Complaint, Gen. 4. 13. verifies this, whether

own

we reade, My Punishment is greater then I can bear; or, Mine Iniquity is greater then that it may be forgiven. How dolefull was his complaint, when he said, Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy Face shall I be hid, and I shall be a Fugitive and a Vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that sindeth me shall slay me? vers. 14. How terribly did the Sting of Conscience exagitate him, when he went out from the Presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod, as a Renegado from God, and one that was pursued by his own Bloud-guiltines?

Nor is the Case of Judas less pregnant, to demonstrate how furious and inevitable is the pursuit of a guilty Conscience. He had sold his Master, the Lord of Glory, for thirty pieces of Silver: but his Mony was as Fire in his Bosome: the remembrance of his devillish Act did so envenome his Spirit, that he could find no Rest, till he had disgorged his Money, and rid himself of his Life too. So that of him was verified what Zophar spake of others, who sin in like manner, 706 20. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Though Wickedness be sweet in the Mouth, though a man hide it under his Tongue: Though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his Mouth: Yet his Meat in his Bowells is turned, it is the Gall of Asps within him. He hath swallowed down Riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast themout of his Belly. He shall suck the poison of Ashs, the Viper's tongue shall slay him. How many Myriads of men have there been in the Ages of the world, who have ventured upon Sin without Fear; have bleffed themfelves in the Success of their unrighteous Projects; have delightfully for a season satiated themselves with the enjoyment of their prohibited Lusts? yet in the conclusion, the Remembrance thereof hath been as a Fire. in their Bones; as a heavy Burthen, that neither their

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own strength nor the help of other men could support

them under.

And the Reason hereof is, Because to them that obey Unrighteousness, there is Indignation and Wrath from God; and consequently, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. 2. 8, 9. And this is that which makes the Heart to be affected as Belshazzar's was: When he saw the singer of a man's hand writing over against the Candlestick, and upon the plaister of the Wall of the King's Palace, his Countenance was changed, and his Thoughts troubled him, so that the Joynts of his Loyns were loosed, and his Knees smote one against another.

How shall thy hands be strong (saith God to the Jews, Ezek. 22. 14.) when I shall deal with thee? The Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa. 33. 14. Therefore the Lord saith, I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the Spirit should fail before me, and the Souls which I have made, Isa. 57. 16. Which leads us to that which is

intimated,

### OBSERVATION.

That though the Spirit of man, when it is wounded with worldly Sorrows, or with Conscience of Sin, cannot Sustain it self from linking; yet the Lord can and doth

Support it.

This is verified by experience in holy Job, then whom none was ever more forely handled, (except our Lord Christ, when he bare our Sins in his Body on the Tree,) informach that he complained, Job 6.4. For the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh

drinketh up my Spirit: the Terrours of God do set themselves in array against me: yet did the Consolations of God so support him, that he could allege, Behold, my Witness is in Heaven, and my Record is on high, Job 16. 19. so as that he could never be drawn to disclaim his own Uprightness, or God's Righteousness.

Holy Paul, though he were abundant in Sufferings, fo that he had the fentence of death in himself, yet he would not relinquish his Trust in God, whom he found the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort: so as that, with the abounding of his Sufferings, he had also

abounding Confolation.

After the like fort was it with Christ Jesu: who though he was in great Agony in the Garden, so that his Soul was heavy unto death; in the days of his sless be offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to save him from death;

yet he was heard in that he feared, Heb. 5. 7.

David, after he had committed that Sin against Uriab the Hittite, when Nathan had discovered the Evil thereof, His Bones maxed old, through his Roaring all the day long; Day and night the Hand of God was heavy upon him; His moisture was turned into the drought of Summer; His Bones, his Soul were sore vexed; Innumerable Evils compassed him about; His Iniquities took hold upon him, so that he was not able to look up, therefore his heart failed him: yet God restored unto him the Joy of his Salvation, upheld him with his free Spirit, took away his Sackcloath, and girded him with Gladness.

The waies that God takes to fustain the Spirits of men in their Infirmities are various. Sometimes by allaying the Sharpness of their Afflictions: sometimes by a mixture of outward or inward Refreshings: sometimes by moderating their Temptations, not suffering them to be tempted above that they are able, but with the Temptation

making

making a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it;

making it short, though it be sharp.

But the chief way whereby the Lord supports the Spirit, when it sinks of it self, is by giving to some the tongue of the learned, that they may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, Isa. 50. 4. whose business it is first to humble, to search the Wound; and then to pour in Oil: first to discover the Malady; and

then to apply the Medicine.

This method is described at large by Elihu, Job 33. from vers. 15. to v. 29. When God hath spoken to man in sleep, and otherwise, to open his ears, to seal his Instruction, to withdraw him from his purposes, to hide Pride from man: He chasteneth him upon his Bed, and the multitude of his Bones with strong pains; so that his Soul draweth near unto the Grave, and his Life to the Destroyers. Yet if there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shewunto man his Uprightness, to make known to him the Atonement which is made by the Bloud of the everlasting Covenant; when he washeth himself with penitentiall Tears, and fprinkles his Conscience with the Bloud of Christ by Faith: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the Pit, I have found a Ransome. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with Joy: for he will render unto man his Righteousness. If when God looks upon men, they say, We have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited us not: He will deliver their Soul from going into the Pit, and their Life shall see the Light.

Thus did Hezekiah find it, as he acknowledgeth, Isa. 38. 16, 17. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my Spirit: (that is, by God's undertaking for him, vers. 14.) so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for Peace, I had great

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Bitterness; but thou hast in love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy back. Thus he creates the fruit of the lips, Peace, Peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is

near, and heals them, Ifa. 57. 19.

Men fin, and then God scourgeth; they cry, and God sends his Messenger to teach them; they are humbled for Sin, and sly to the Bloud of Christ for Peace: Believing in him, they obtain Reconciliation; being reconciled, the Spirit of Christ, as the Comsorter, is given them, to make known the things that are freely given by God: hence comes for in believing, and Hope of the Inheritance of life, by which they are supported; which I was to demonstrate.

### APPLICATION.

And now this belongs to you, that so many of you as have by proof sound the truth of this may be thankfull; so many as do or shall need these directions, may wisely make use of them. You are all of you yet in the Body, and this Body you bear about you is a Body of Sin and Death: and perhaps you have been affected as S. Paut was, when he cried out, O pretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the Body of this death? Rom. 7. 24.

If you have not found it already, you may expect fuch a fense of your Infirmities, as may perhaps make you tremble and quake, bemoan God's Absence from you; and from the words of your Roaring, you may find Wounds in your Spirit, and Breach in your Bones. Conscience of Sin, sense of God's Rod on your backs, may make you cry out in the bitterness of your Soul for Ease

and Help.

If any of you have already found your selves in this S Case

Case, you are able to tell how weak your Spirit hath been, either to avoid or bear the Blows of God's Hand. Onely they are happy in such a case who can truly say,

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sure all others are *Phylicians of no value*. It is in vain to imagine any folid Comfort to your Spirit by a Pope's Pardon, or a Priest's Absolution, or any other Remedy, which either your own Mind or others Wit can minister to you for your Ease or Recovery. It is onely the Balm of the Gospell, the Physician of Heaven, that can make a perfect Cure. Without these some Mountebanks may make a palliated Cure, but the Sore will break out again.

Oh then be sure to take home with you this Receipt, write upon it *Probatum est*: No Medicine like God's Favour, obtained by sound Humiliation, true Repentance, unseigned Faith in the Bloud of *Christ*, to heal your Plagues, whether from God's Judgments, or your

own Fears.

Keep this as the onely Plague-water, make use of it toties quoties, as oft as you find need, in life and death. And when you have found Refreshing in your Spirits by it, forget not to lift up your eyes to the Father of Spirits, both by acknowledgment of what Support you have had, and by seeking such farther Comfort from him

as you may need.

I shall dismis you with S. Paul's prayer, 2 Thes. 2.16, 17. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope through Grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work. To whom, with the Blessed Spirit, be ascribed, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

## PIETY

THE

## DESIGN of PARDON.

## The Tenth SERMON.

## PSALM CXXX. 4.

But there is Mercy, or Forgiveness, with thee, that thou maist be feared.

HIS Psalm is one of the Fisteen which are intituled Songs of Degrees. For what reason they are so called, is variously conjectured, but not certainly determined. It is also one of the Seven termed Penitentiall Psalms. The matter of it is Supplication, with a declaration of the Psalmist's Resolution or Practice, v. 5, 6. and an Exhortation to wait and hope in God, as he did, with assurance of God's Graciousness and Mercifull intention to Israel, vers. 7, 8.

The Supplication expresses that is, deep Mire or Waters: by which are fignified great Calamities, Pfal. 69. 2,14,15. such as those are in that are put into a Dungeon, as Jeremiah was, Jer. 38. 6. or that are cast into a deep River, Sea or Lake, in which they are like to be

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overwhelmed. It notes some great Assliction; whether inward or outward, private or publick, is not certain; though the words in vers. 3, 4. seem to intimate it to have been inward, out of the sense of Sin, and terrour of Soul by reason of it.

In this condition, he faith, he called or cried to God:

and his Cry was,

1. In general for Audience; Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my Supplications, vers. 2.

2. With Confession of his Guiltines; vers. 3. If

thou, Lord, shouldst mark Iniquities.

3. With imploring and confident application of Forgiveness, in my Text; But there is Mercy, or Forgive-

ness, with thee, that thou maist be feared.

Whether the word be read Mercy, or Forgiveness, it is not much material; faving that this latter is more agreeable to the words, and to the Coherence with vers. 3. and better expresseth, the particular Mercy meant here. The Greek hath it mage ool & i has no sow, with thee is Propitiation, or Appealing: which is either the same with Forgiveness, or connexed with it. Nor is it of any moment whether we reade For, or But; fave that this latter is more apposite to the matter. And it is all to one purpose, whether we reade with thee, or from thee, the Hebrew particle fignifying both; fave that this latter is more expressive of the sense. And the meaning is the same with that in Daniel 9. 9. To the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. The latter part of the verse is otherwise read by the Greek and Vulgar Latin upon mistakes, which Learned men in their Annotations take notice of. (Doctour Hammond on this place.) But the reading according to the Originall is, for thy fear; which is all one with our Translation, that thou maift

maist be feared; that is, reverenced, worshipped, and obeyed, which are usually comprehended under the Fear of God. The Truths included in this passage are,

1. That there is Forgiveness with or from God.

2. That this Forgiveness engageth or encourageth men to fear him.

Of these in their order.

### I. OBSERVATION.

That there is Forgiveness with or from God.

That God is a pardoming God, is the Assertion of God himself, in that Proclamation in which he told Moses, he would make all his Goodness to pass before him: which was thus delivered, Exod. 34. 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin. Conformable whereunto, in that Prayer of Nehemiah, (9. 17.) it is said, Thou art a God ready to pardon, or, a God of Pardons; gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great Kindness. And the Prophet 1sa. (55.7.) exhorts the wicked to return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

It is then one of God's Jewells, which his Crown is fet with, that he is not as a cruell Tyrant or infernall Fiend, with whom there is nothing but Cruelty and Mischievousness: but as a gracious King or loving Father, in whom is Clemency as well as Justice, affectionate Forgiveness as well as severe Correction. Which that we may the better conceive, (it being that on which our Life lies,) it will be requisite that we con-

fider,

1. What Sins God forgives.

2. For what Motive.

3. To whom he forgives them.

4. Why he forgives them.

I. For the first, our Saviour hath resolved it in express terms, Mark 3. 28, 29. Verily I say unto you, All Sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and Blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never Forgiveness, but is in danger of eternall Damnation.

What this Sin is, and whether any be at this day guilty of it, is a Question that requires some disquisition. The Schoolmen (as Aquinas) make six Species of the Sin against the Holy Ghost; Despair, Presumption, Impenitency, Obstinacy, Impugning the acknowledged Truth, and Envying our Brother's Grace.

Protestant Divines, taking in other Texts, out of the Epistles to the Hebrews and Titus, and out of S. John's 1. Epistle, have formed such a Definition as this, That it is a Blaspheming against the Gospel of Christ, testified by a clear Conviction of the Spirit of God in the heart of the Blasphemer, arising out of a spightfull Hatred and obstinate Rejection of that Truth and Testimony of and by which he was convinced, causing an oppugning of it and the Avouchers of it, upon the strong possession Satan hath got in his Heart.

But the Text, Mark 3.30. in which it is added, Because they said, He bath an unclean Spirit, doth seem to restrain it to that spightfull belying Christ's Miracles, (done by the Spirit of God most evividently, so as that they could not gainsay it,)

as if they were done by the Prince of Devils, and Christ were possessed and acted by an Unclean Spirit. Which makes it very probable, that none at this day can (as things are) commit it, there being no such Miracles now done, as can evidently shew the Operation of the Holy Spirit to be blasphemed, as it was by the Pharisees. Nor is Julian the Apostate sufficiently proved (however so judged by some of the Ancients) to have committed this Sin.

Much less have any of those doubting Souls, who, by reason of their Tenderness of Conscience, (which makes their very jealous and fearfull of their own Condition,) have been apt to charge themselves with this Sin, any reason so to doe; they being guilty of no such Blasphemy in words, Rejecting of Christ, Speaking evil of his Spirit or its Operations, Oppugning of the Gospel, or the Believers of it; nor of any Obstinacy in any course of open Persecution, or Disclaiming Christ and his Gospel.

Perhaps this which I have said may be of great use to some doubting and troubled Spirits, who put themselves on the Rack, through Mistakes arising from the Weakness of their Understandings, and the Fear-

fulness of their Hearts.

As for any other Sins, they are not in their own nature unpardonable: other Blashhemies are pardonable. Peter's Denying Christ (though with Cursing himself if he knew him, yet) had Pardon. Manasseh, though notorious for his Cruelties, as filling Jerusalem with innocent Bloud, even of the Prophets of God, though infamous for his setting up the most abominable Idolatries of the Gentiles, though proceeding so far as to use Familiar spirits, yet when he was humbled, and prayed to God in his Affliction, God heard him, and forgave him, 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13. I instance in these, as seeming to

come nighest to the Sin against the Holy Ghost: the one siming against Knowledge, after Warning, and solemn Promise to the contrary; the other offending in the most hainous manner, in Sins of the greatest Guilt, with extreme Wilfulness and Violence.

Not to mention the Sins of David, or Lot, or Noah, or Solomon: If Cain meant it as the Vulgar Latin hath it, Gen. 4. 13. My Sin is greater then can be forgiven; it might well be replied to him, Mentiris, Cain, Thon hieft, Cain: Thy Sin might have been forgiven, if thou hadft had a penitent Heart, and hadft begged Pardon from God. Though in the Law God would not forgive some Sins, as Blasphemy, Murther, Adultery, Sins with an high hand, fo as to expiate them by Sacrifice. and free the Sinner from death: though God sware to Eli, that the Iniquities of his House should not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offerings for ever, 1 Sam. 3.14. though he never will pardon the Sin of Devils, of Indas the Son of Perdition, nor the final Impenitent and Unbeliever: Yet Christ tells us plainly, No kind of Sin or Blasphemy (except one) but is pardonable to the sons of men.

II. But then, upon what Motive God forgiveth Sins,

is to be farther confidered.

They that say that any Sins against God are venial ex genere suo, the whole kind of them of their own Nature; as having an evil or inordinate thing for their Object, but not against the Love of God or our Neighbour; or by reason of the Smalness of the matter in which, or the sudden Motion by which they are done; speak otherwise then the Scripture, which makes the Wages of Sin simply, and every Sin, death, Rom. 6. 23. and him cursed who continues not in every thing written in the Law to doe it, Gal. 3. 10. They derogate from the efficacy of Christ's Blond, which alone is it that cleanseth

cleanseth from all Sin; make it a light matter to fin against the Most high and infinite Majesty; would excuse our First Parents Sin; and harden men in Impeni-

tency.

And when they make voluntary Works of Penance Satisfaction for such Sins, Priests Absolutions., Popes Pardons, and saying of Divine Offices for the Sinner, sufficient to take away the Guilt of Sin against God; though they provide for their accursed Gain, yet they derogate from the Necessity and alone Sufficiency of Christ's Bloud, who is the onely Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for our Sins, and the Sins of

the whole world, I fob. 2. I, 2.

-We learn Heb. 9. 22. that without shedding of bloud is no Remission: and that though the Sacrifices of the Law might procure Forgiveness in respect of some Penalties, and fanctify to the purifying of the Flesh; yet that it is the Blond of Christ alone ( who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God ) that can purge our Consciences from dead works, to serve the living God, vers. 14. and that it is for Christ's sake ( whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through faith in his Bloud to declare his Righteonfnes for the Remifsion of Sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Rom. 3. 25. ) that God doth forgive any Sins of any persons, Eph. 4. 32. Not for any Saint's or Martyr's Intercession; or any Surplusage of Merits in the Treafury of the Church, distributed by the Pope's Indulgence; or for the bare Work done, of faying Mass, finging Dirges, or other Offices, for a person deceased; or merely for the Priest's Absolution upon Auricular Confession in the Sacrament of Penance; or for any humane Satisfaction whatfoever: but by the Expiation of Christ's Bloud, and his Intercession for them to whom Sins are forgiven; though not without their due due Qualifications, which are next to be confidered.

III. The Persons to whom God forgives sins are not all whatsoever. There are, that, after their bardness and impenitent Heart, treasure up unto themselves Wrath against the day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, Rom. 2. 5. Nor all that are in the visible Church, that have been baptized into the Name of Christ. Notwithstanding Simon Magus believed, was baptized, continued with Philip, and wondered beholding the Miracles and Signs which were done: yet when, by his offer of Money for the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost, his Heart appeared not right in the sight of God, S. Peter admonishes him to repent of that his Wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of his Heart might be forgiven him, Act. 8. 13, 21, 22. But,

1. They to whom God forgives Sins must be real and unfeigned Penitents; fuch as are sensible of their Sins, and the Defert of them; fuch as are humbled in their own eyes, yea fo as to loath themselves for their Iniquities; such as have that Sorrow which is after God, that worketh Repentance not to be repented of. Such a Repentance as is not for some Sins onely, but for all; not onely for Sins open and notorious, but also for Sins fecret, and known to themselves and God alone; not onely for Sins of outward Action or Words, but also for Sins of Thought, of evil Concupiscence; not onely for Sins of Commission, but also for Sins of Omission: and according to the degrees of them, with a proportionable degree of Sorrow; fo as to mourn much, where the Sin hath been very hainous, as David's was. And that not onely by reason of the Affliction consequent. Danger of Hell, or Infamy; but also for the Dishonouring of God, and the Offending of him, not onely as a severe Judge, but also an indulgent Father. Against thee, thee onely, have I finned, and done this Evil

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in thy light, faith David, Pfalm 51, 4. And, Father, ( faith the prodigal Son, Luk. 15.21. ) I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy light, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. Thus S. John Baptift preached the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins, Mark 1.4. S. Peter, Act. 2. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins. And, Repent, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, Act. 3. 19. To them that thus Repent, there is Forgiveness of Sins, not to the Impeni-

tent and unrelenting.

2. To Repentance must be joyned Confession of Sin. If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our Sins, God is faithfull and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his word is not in us, I Joh. I. 8, 9, 10. How full is the Scripture against all Self-justitiaries, Pharisees, Philosophers, Votaries, Pelagians, Quakers, and other Perfectionifts, that boaft of their own Good works, and their being free from Sin? No marvel that they that think they have no need of Pardon, should find none. God filleth the Hungry with good things: the Rich he sendeth empty away. The proud Pharise, that talked of his own Well-doings, the boafting Papift, that is confident of his own good Merits from God, are not capable of Justification. It is the poor Publican, that is sensible of his Sin, that stands afar off, that will not lift up fo much as his eyes to Heaven, as being dejected by the sense of his Sins, but smites on his breast, Saying, God be mercifull to me a Sinner, that goes home justified, rather then the other; as Christ himself hath determined, Luk. 18. 12, 14.

When I kept filence, day and night ( with David to

God, Pfal. 32.3, 4, 5. ) thy Hand was heavy upon me. I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my Transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin. There was-no necessity of Auricular Popish Confession to a Priest; his purpose of doing it to God seriously, and with true Compunction and Contrition of Soul, was sufficient for his Pardon. David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord: and Nathan, without injoyning him Penance for Satisfaction, tells him immediately, The Lord also hath put away thy Sin. A free and unfeigned Confession of Sinsto God never goes without Pardon, if it be with real Sorrow, and giving to God the Glory of his Justice: if other Qualifications be withall added, which are also to be considered; whereof the next and third is, That there be a Forfaking of the Sin in Heart and in Act.

- 3. That Sin that shall be pardoned must be hated, must be left. He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have Mercy. Prov. 28. 13. While we love and cherish Sin, we bid defiance to God, and thew our felves Enemies to him. and therefore can expect no Favour from him: for he is not a God that hath pleasure in Wickedness, neither Shall Evil dwell with bim, faith the Pfalmift, Pfal. 5. 4. For a man to fay he is forry for his Sin, (as often men do, ) and yet to commit it customarily again, is indeed to belie himself. True Sorrow would make men fearfull and wary how they fall into that, for which they fay they are forry. Piscator ictus sapit : If they were sensible of the Evil of Sin, they would dread a Relapse into it. And besides, it is no better then a mocking of God, to confess Sin, and pray him to forgive it, and yet to continue in the practice of it. It is all one as if thou shouldst beg of God to give thee a Licence

Christ

or Dispensation to sin: as if thou shouldst tell him. thou hast sinned indeed, but thou hopest he will not be angry, though thou doe so again: as if thou shouldst ask of God, that he would make void his Law for thy fake; let thee live as if thou owedst no Subjection to him. It is to declare thy felf a professed Rebell against him; to tell him, that be shall not rule over thee; and in effect to fay, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Much more evil is it, when men harden themselves against Reproof; hate him that deals plainly with them, because he shews them the Sin which they will not leave; are Enemies to him that tells them the Truth; hate him that rebuketh in the Gate, and abhorre him that speaks uprightly, Amos 5. 10. Such men are so far from obtaining Pardon, that they fall into Judas his Curse, of adding Iniquity to Iniquity, and never come into God's Righteousness, Pfal. 69. 27.

4. That Sin may be forgiven, the chiefest Qualification of all must not be omitted, Faith in the Lord Jesus; who though he knew no Sin, yet was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21. This is the tenour of the Gospel. ( as Christ himself instructed his Apostles, ) that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations, Luk. 24. 47. And accordingly S. Peter faith to Cornelius, Act. 10. 43. To Christ give all the Prophets witness, that through his Name, whosever believeth in him shall receive Remission of Sins. And S. Paul, Act. 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sin: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. He was delivered for our Offences, and raised for our Justification, Rom.4. 25.

Christ died for our Sins, according to the Scriptures, I Cor. 15.3. He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities : the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone aftray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord bath laid on him the Iniquity of us all, Ifa. 53.5, 6. His own felf bare our Sins in his own body on the Tree, I Pet. 2. 24. These and many more places in Holy Scripture do evince, that it is by the Death of Christ that our Sins are remitted. And the Apostle, Heb. 10. 12. tells us, that after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sins, he sate down for ever at the right hand of God: and, Heb. 9. 24. that he is entred into heaven with his bloud, to appear for us in the pre-Sence of God: and, Heb. 10. 14. that by one Offering he bath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. And therefore they that reject that Sacrifice, and flick to the Law and its Priesthood, miss of Forgiveness of Sins. It is impossible now, without Faith in Christ, his Death, Refurrection, and Intercession at God's right Hand, to be free from Condemnation, and to obtain Forgiveness. But Faith is sufficient (without the Figment of the unbloudy Propitiatory Sacrifice offered by a Priest in the Mass) to expiate Sin, and to obtain Remission. Whofoever therefore believes not that Christ is he that was to come, that doth not believe and trust to his Bloud and Intercession for Forgiveness with God, that trusts in the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Milk of the Virgin Mary, the Mediation of Saints, or any other thing besides Christ's Death and Intercession, that man forfeits his interest in God's Pardoning Grace.

5. That Sin may be forgiven, there must be a Turning to the Lord. Let the wicked for sake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our

God, for he will abundantly pardon, faith the Prophet Isa. (55.7.) Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his Sins? saith Jeremy, Lament. 3.39. and directs him the best course, Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, vers. 40. And that is to be done,

1. By humble Supplication; Ibid. v. 41. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens; by Praying for it, Matth. 6. 12. by justifying God, condemning our selves; taking Shame to our selves, and acquitting God from all blame; deprecating his Severity, imploring his Mercy for his Son's sake, whom God sending in the likeness of sinful step, hath condemned Sin in the slesh: and therefore there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1, 3.

2. But then must be added the second thing, wherein we turn to God, to wit, Newness of life: There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the Evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evil, learn to doe well; seek Judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widows: and then, faith God, Come now, and let us reason together: Though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wooll, Ifa. 1. 16, 17, 18. It is not the plea of Innocency that prevails with God, but the earnest Supplication for Mercy: not the Tale of a vain-glorious Pharisee, but the feeling Prayer of a broken-hearted Publican, that obtains Forgiveness. Nor will he that bath escaped the Pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ be safe, if with the Dog he return to his vomit, and the Sow that was washed, to ber wallowing in the mire. He that fins again, fins more dangeroully: as he that falls into a Relapse is more desperately . sperately sick. New Obedience is necessary to assure

the Forgiveness of old Sins.

6. There is yet another Qualification necessary to the Forgiveness of our own Sins, that we forgive other mens Sins against our selves. Our Saviour puts it into the Lord's Prayer, that we should profess to God our Forgiveness of them that are indebted to us, as a Reafon why we expect Forgiveness of him when we pray him to forgive us. Yea he allows us not to ask Forgiveness of God, but according as we forgive others. If you forgive men their Trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their Trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your Trespasfes, Matth. 6. 14, 15. Yea, in the close of that Parable, Matth. 18. 35. he tells us, that our heavenly Father will exact our Debts, cast us into Prison, deliver us to the Tormentours, if we from our hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespasses.

He that bears a Grudge, that referves a purpose of Revenge in his breast, that saies he will forgive, but not forget, that passeth not an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion of his Brother's Injuries, doth but delude God, play the Hypocrite with him, when he prays the Lord's Prayer; shews himself to be unlike to God; of a venomous, Toad-like, Viper-like nature, malicious like Satan; and so doth the more provoke and enrage God against him, as being an unthankfull, virulent, Devillish Wretch, that deals so unworthily with him, and abuseth him to his face. And this ushers in the last

thing I am to consider, to wit,

IV. Why there is Forgiveness with God.

Of many Reasons I shall name one or two, besides

that in my Text.

pitifull, and of tender Mercy, Jam. 5.11. He is not like

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a cruel Tyrant, that delights to destroy; but like a gracious King, that is glad to save.

Est piger ad pænam Princeps, ad præmia velox:

Quique dolet quoties cogitur esse ferox.

It is for a Sicilian Tyrant, to invent Torments; or rather for a Fiend of Hell, to rejoyce in doing hurt. I am the Lord which exercife Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord, Jer. 9. 24. Who is a God like unto thee, (saith the Prophet Micah, 7. 18, 19.) that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the remnant of his Heritage? he retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy. He will turn again, he will have Compassion on us, he will subdue our Iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their Sins into the depth of the Sea. And then the Prophet adds, vers. 20. that which is my Second Reason why God forgives,

cy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our Fathers from the days of old. This is the Reason why he hath raised up a Horn of Salvation, and gives the knowledge of Salvation for or by the Remission of Sins: to perform the Mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant, the Oath which he sware to our Father Abraham, Luk. 1. 69, 72, 73, 77. And for this Reason the Bloud of Christ is termed by himself, the bloud of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins, Matth. 26. 28. And the Covenant of God is alleged as witnessing the effect of Christ's Sacrifice, wherein God said, Their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more, Heb. 10. 16, 17. For which rea-

fon S. John saith, that God is faithfull and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness, I Joh. I. 9. His Mercifull nature prompts him to forgive Sins; his Wisedom hath directed him to doe it

by

2. Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, and the Mer-

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by the Bloud of Christ; his Truth, to keep his Covenant: and the End is, that he may be seared. Which brings me to the Second Point in my Text.

### - II. OBSERVATION.

That God's Forgiveness engageth and encourageth men

to fear him.

It is objected against the Jews, Jer. 5. 23, 24. that they had a revolting and a rebellious Heart, because they said not in their hearts, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth Rain, both the former and the latter in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the Harvest. Which evinceth this to be an Evil, That men fear not God notwithstanding his Providences to them for good: and therefore God's Care of us should engage us to fear him. And it is prophesied, that the Children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his Goodness in the latter days, Hos. 3. 5. Which intimates, that God's Goodness is to be feared; and that it is both an engagement and encouragement to fear him, that he is good. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. Pfal. 34.9.

Now of all parts of his Goodness, this is the chief, his Forgiving Sins. It is that which shews the greatest Kindness and Condescension in God. Therefore when David blesseth God, he puts this in the first place; Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits, Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, Psal. 103. 2, 3. And it is the greatest Blessing to us. Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, Psal. 32. 1, 2. This Favour then requires Fear in the

greatest

greatest degree. Not a tormenting Fear, which confifteth not with Love, and which is expelled by Love, 1 fob. 4. 18. fuch as is in Devils, that fear and tremble, 7am. 2. 19. but a dutifull Fear, which makes us wary how we offend God, and studious how to please him: makes us fear him, not as an Enemy or Tyrant, from whom we expect nothing but hard Usage and fore Tasks; but as a good Master, or a loving Father, whom we fear as our Superiour, that may punish us, yet love for his Goodness, Bounty, and Indulgence to us. This Fear is usually termed a filial or reverentiall Fear: which is manifested, I. in our Worship of him with reverence and godly fear, Heb. 12.28. where the Fear of God is put for his Worship, as Isa. 29. 13. 2. in our Obedience to him, both active, in doing his Will, and passive, in submitting to his Correction. Now to this Fear God's Forgiveness engageth us,

1. Because such Forgiveness should and doth beget Love. To whom many Sins were forgiven, she loved much, saith Christ, Luk. 7. 47. What Rebel is so hardhearted, as not to love his Prince, that hath forgiven his manifold Treasons? We have been more treacherous to God, and yet he forgives us; and shall we not

then love him, and fear to offend him?

2. There is no greater Security can be given to draw our Hearts to God, then the Forgiveness of Sins. This is that Loving-kindness that draws us to God, Jer. 31. 3. the Chords of a man, the Bands of Love, that tie us fast to God, Hos. 11.4. And therefore there is no more expedite, more rationall, more sure way to maintain perpetuall Amity between us and God, to devote us to his Service, to bring us into Communion with him, then the Preaching and Believing the rich Grace of the Gospel in the Remission of Sins by Jesus Christ, according to the New Covenant in his V 2 Bloud.

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Bloud. But I see the time will not permit me to enlarge on this precious Subject: I shall now apply that which hath been said in some necessary Uses, and so end.

### - APPLICATION.

1. First then, If there be Forgiveness with God, and that of the greatest Sins, let no drooping Soul sink under the sense of his Sins: though they have been Scarlet or Crimson Sins, yet there is Pardon to be had.

It is true, (as now-a-days things go,) the greatest Sinners are most hardened in Security: there is an Atheistical Spirit, that makes men bold in Sinning. Whether it be from the fubtle Infinuations of some Seducers, who (like Balaam of old) instill into mens minds those Principles which make them as audacious as Zimri and Cozbi of old were, so that they declare their Sins as Sodom, and hide them not; ungodly men crept in among us, turning the Grace of God into wantonness: or from their doting so much on Nature, as they call it, that they forget the God of Nature; fo magnifying Naturam naturatam, that they heed not Naturam naturantem, as they barbarously speak in the Schools: or that the Miscarriages of hypocriticall Professours of Religion induce them to think all Zeal in Religion is but from Fancy, not God's Spirit; and that all zealous persons are Fanaticks, or men not in their right wits, not foberly wife.

So it is, that the greatest part either openly commit the most horrid Sins; monstrously Swearing, as if they would dare God to his face, Scoffing at the practice of Piety, making no scruple of Deceiving, spending their time in Drinking, prodigally wasting their Estates by Luxury and the like, which should be imployed to good Uses, for the Relief of others, and the publick benefit: or they secretly practise some or all these Sins (or worse, if it may be) under Disguises of Religion and other Vizors without Fear. They that complain most of Sin, are usually they that are most fearfull of Sin.

Yet to both it is needfull this Doctrine be taught, of God's Forgiveness. The most hardened Manasseh may be taken in the Thorns, and humbled: the most audacious Sinner among you may be awakened, and his Eyes opened, to see how evil and bitter a thing it is that he hath sinned against the Lord, and his Fear hath not been in him: Poverty, Imprisonment, Sickness, or Death approaching, may open his Ears to Discipline, and make him remember God. If these things happen, let him remember (though but then) that there is Forgiveness with God. And for any other perplexed person, let him never forget to have this Cordial in the Closet of his Heart, which may revive him in his Agonies and Faintings of spirit, That there is Forgiveness with the Lord. But then,

2. Let them not forget how and by what means it is obtained, to wit, by Repentance, Confession, Forfaking of Sin, Faith in Christ's bloud, humble Supplication to God, new Obedience to him, and Forgiveness of our Brother. There must be another Heart, a heart of Flesh, not a heart of Stone, in him that shall obtain Forgiveness. He shall have Judgment without Mercy that shews no Mercy. You must take heed of seeking Forgiveness by Popes or Priests supposed power to forgive Sins by their Authority, by others officiating for you; or by your own Satisfactions, Works of Penance, Fasting, Alms, or other laborious Works imposed, or undertaken by your selves, as meriting or procuring your Absolution. But you must wholly

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rely on the Death and Intercession of Christ in Heaven, and the Covenant in his Bloud. Though in the mean time you are not to omit other Duties, which I have shewed to be required of God in their place.

3. Be fure not to forget to magnifie the Grace of God, with whom is Forgiveness. Stand and admire that infinite Goodness, that after all the Sins of thy Progenitours, (Adam's Sin in Revolting from God his Maker and Benefactour, the Sins of thy Pagan Ancestours in their horrid Idolatries and other Provocations, the Sins of thy Popish Ancestours in their perverting the Gospell of Christ, imitating the Vices and Superstitions of Pagans, corrupting Christianity, and destroying Myriads of holy Souls, who in their Generations opposed their Abominations, and contended for the Truth of Christ,) besides thy own Sins of Idleness, Pride, Wantonness, Envy, Covetousness, Ungodlines, Profaning holy things, living without God in the world, he should yet have Mercy on thee, pardon thy Sins, and fave thy Soul. Oh fay with David, Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name, Pfal. 103. 1.

4. Forget not to fear him for the time to come. It is the End of his Forgiving, that thou shouldst fear him. If God miss his End, thou wilt lose thy hopes of Forgiveness. Mark what our Saviour saith, Joh: 5. 14. Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee. Surely, saith Elihn, Job 34. 31, 32. it is meet to be said unto God, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me: if Phave done Iniquity, I will doe no more. If pardoning Grace do not better thee, it will leave thee more inexcusable, and thy Damnation more certain and just. If thou become not obsequious to God, and mercifull to others, thy Pardon will be null'd.

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Oh do not forfeit thy Pardon by After-disobedience: but as thou hast God to remember thee in Mercy, be sure to remember him by Dutifulness to him all thy days. That when thou shalt meet with thy Father in Heaven, thou maist be ravish'd with his Grace, and he may welcome thee as his obedient Son into his everlasting Joy. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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# EFFECTUAL REMEDY.

## The Eleventh SERMON.

PSAL. IXXIX. 8.

O remember not against us former Iniquities: let thy tender Mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low.

HE Message which was sent from Hezekiah, that good King of Judah, to the Prophet Isaiah, This Day is a Day of Trouble and Rebuke: Wherefore lift up thy Prayer for the Remnant that is left, Isa. 37. 3, 4. is by His MAJESTIE's Proclamation fent to us: We are minded by our Gracious King, That this Day is a Day of Trouble, such as that we may call it Magor-Missabb, Terrour round about us; a Day of Rebuke, wherein the great Correctour of the World rebukes us in his Anger, and chastens us in his hot Difbleasure. Hæret lateri lethalis Arundo; The Arrow of the Almighty flies by day and night among us, flicks fast in us, and drinks up our Spirit: so as that we are consumed by his Anger, and by his Wrath we are troubled. And therefore it is now a Time for us to lift up our Prayer for the Remnant that is left; and to betake our selves to our Litany in good earnest, From Plague and Pestilence, good Lord, deliver us. HitherHitherto are we led by this Precedent which I have

read to you, O remember not against us, &c.

The Argument of the Pfalm sufficiently intimates the Time and the Occasion of penning it. The sirst Verse being a Complaint to God, that the Heathen were come into God's Inheritance, that is, the Land of Judæa, had defiled or profaned his holy Temple, by casting it to the ground, and had laid Jerusalem on heaps. Which was done by none but Chaldwans, when this Psalm was composed: and therefore it was composed after, and upon occasion of the Demolition and Conslagration of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple by Nebuchadnezzar's appointment, of which we reade Jer. 52. which moved either Ezra, or Daniel, or some other Holy person of that Time, to address himself to God with Complaint, Exposulation, and Petition, in the words of my Text, O remember not against us, &c.

Wherein are,

I. A Deprecation, O remember not, &c. By former Iniquities some understand their Idolatry in making the Colden Calf in the Wilderness: concerning which the Jew have a Tradition, That in all the Mileries which came upon that People, there was some Remembrance of that Sin; according to that which is faid in Exod. 32. 34. Nevertheless, in the Day when I shall visit. I will visit their Sin upon them. But more probably are meant the Sins of Manasseh and other Kings, whereby they polluted the Temple with Heathenish Abominations, filled ferusalem with blond, brake their Oath to Nebuchadnezzar, were obstinate against all the Warnings of the Prophets, whom they mocked, despising their words, and misusing their persons; which stirred up the Wrath of God against his people, so as there was no Remedy, 2 Chron. 36. 16. These were the Sins that Daniel meant in his Supplication, which either symbolized

lized or was contemporary with this, Dan. 9. 3, 6. Now God is faid to remember Sins, when he doth actually punish persons for them; and this is deprecated here: simple Forgetfulness being a thing impossible to befall God, who is uncapable of any defect, but hath all things, past, present, and to come, in his view through-

out all Eternity.

2. Here is a Petition for Help, Let thy tender Mercies speedily prevent us. Wherein the thing desired is, the coming of Aid for their Deliverance from their Captivity, and the restoring of their City and Temple; and that to be hastened, the time seeming long to them, in which they were oppressed by the Babylonian Kings, and kept from the Land of their defires. And this is begged as a product of God's tender Mercies, or Bowels of Mercies: by which Expression such Mercy as is wont to be in Mothers towards the Children of their womb, whose Bowells earn towards them, is attributed to God. Though, to speak exactly, (as the Schoolmen fay,) Mercy is not in God secundum Affectum, he hath not any formal Dolour or Sympathy, so as to be grieved with our Evills, as we are when we pity others; but secundum Effectum, in respect of the Effect, because God in our Misery doth ( as we doe when we have Compassion on others ) afford Succour and Relief to those whom he is said to be mercifull to.

3. The Petition is enforced with the mention of their low Condition; For we are brought very low, impoverished, or made thin: that is, we are poor in Purse, thin of People, much diminished every way, spoiled, debarred of our Liberty, of our Religion, of our Peace, burthened with imperious Commands, heavy Yokes of the Lordly Tyrants of Babylon, persecuted with a fiery Furnace for not adoring their Idol, in danger of casting into a Den of Lions for calling upon the Name of our X 2 God,

God, destined to a Panolethry, or a total Slaughter, by wicked Courtiers, proud Haman and his Complices, and have none to help us but our God; and therefore we pray, Let thy tender Mercies speedily prevent us, or, as in the Verse next my Text, Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name: and deliver us, and purge away our Sins for thy Name's sake. From whence (though the occasion of the present business be somewhat different) we may deduce these Observations, usefull for this Day's work.

1. That it is God's Remembring of Sins which is

the reason of the Calamities that befall a people.

2. That the Removing of them is an effect of his tender Mercies.

3. That God's Time of Help is the low Condition

of Supplicants.

4. That Bewailing of Sins, and humble Supplication for Mercy, are the proper and effectual Remedies against the Calamities which are incumbent on God's people.

Of these in their order.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That it is God's Remembrance of Sins, which is the

reason of the Calamities that befall a people.

It is the Maxim of the Apostle, Rom. 6. 23. That the Wages, or Stipend, of Sin is Death. Death and all the Evils tending to it were at first the adjudged Pay for Sin against God; and Sin is still the Egge out of which all the venomous brood of Mischiess incident to mankind are hatched. By one man Sin entred into the world, and Death by Sin: and so Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. 5. 12. Adam opened the Floud-gate whereby a Deluge of all sorts of Miscries hath drowned the world.

But

But though his Sin were the Fountain of all Calamities: yet as Rivers swell by much Rain, and overflowing cause particular Inundations of some places; so it is with Man by reason of Sin: besides the First man's Transgression, there is such an increase of Sin in his Posterity, that it provokes God sometimes to inflict fuch remarkable Plagues and Vengeance as are different from the common Death of all men. The Uncleanness and Cruelty of the Old world in Noah's days brought the universal Floud on the world of the Ungodly. The excessive Pride, Filthiness, Riot, Bestiality of the Sodomites, brought down on them from Heaven Fire and Brimstone, to consume them. The Oppressing of Israel, with the Hardness of Pharaoh's Heart, caused the drowning of him and his Army in the Red sea. Yea, the remarkable Sins of those who have been owned as God's own People, have caused particular Judgments. Achan's Sin made Ifrael fly before the Canaanites. Sanl's Sin caused three years Famine. Hophni and Phineas, by their profaning the Offering of the Lord, brought on Eli's House the Loss of his Sons, the Loss of the Ark, and the Deprivation of his Posterity from the Priesthood. Yea, David's Sin, in numbring of the people, moved God to fend a Plague on Ifrael, which swept away seventy thousand men. But when Manasfeb had filled ferusalem with Witchcraft, Idolatry, Cruelty, and added an obdupate Heart against God's Messengers, the Desolation by Nebuchadnezzar seized on them in a far greater measure. But worst of all, when the Jews killed the Lord Jesus, and their own Prophets, and persecuted the Apostles of Christ, not pleasing God, and being contrary to all men; forbidding the Apostles to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their Sins always: then Wrath came upon them to the uttermost, as S. Paul speaks, I Thess. 2. 15, 16. Yea.

Yea, were there no words of Holy Scripture to inform us, whence wasting Wars, Inundations of water, great Famines, confuming Pestilence, and other effects of Divine Vengeance come on a Nation: yet the Histories of such people as knew not God, the Observations of considerate men, the extorted or free Confesfion of notorious Sinners in all Ages, were abundant evidence to inferrre, that it is God's Remembrance of Sin that is the Source of Calamities: it being usual for all forts of Sinners, to accuse themselves, their own Consciences bearing witness against them, when Evils are upon them. Adonibezek could remember his Cruelty, when the Lex talionis took hold on him: Judg. 1.7. And Toseph's Brethren could then acknowledge that God had found out their Iniquity, when they were in Distress themselves: Gen. 42. 21. and 44. 16. Any remarkable Affliction, that is not ordinary and common, wrings out from guilty Consciences such expressions as that of the Widow of Sarepta, 1 King. 17.18. O thou man of God, art thou come to call my Sin to Remembrance, and to flay my Son?

Consonant hereto are God's Declarations of himself. Isa. 59.1,2. Behold, the Lord's Hand is not shortned, that it cannot save: neither is his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your Iniquities have separated between you and your God: and your Sins have hid his Face from you. Perditio tua ex ta, Israel: O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, Hos. 13. 9. Your Iniquities have turned away these things, and your Sins have withholden good things

from you, Jer. 5. 25.

We may then thank our selves for all the Evils that come upon us: we must not cast them upon Destiny, Stars, or any other Cause, and leave out the principal Cause, which is the plague of our own hearts. God is neither the Authour of Sin, northe Punisher of Sin without cause.

of

cause. It is the Devil's property, to rejoyce in Evil: and therefore as he tempts to Sin, so he delights to torment. It is otherwise with God: Afflictions are Opuralienum, his strange work. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, To crush under his seet all the prisoners of the earth, Lament. 3. 33, 34. Is God unrighteous, who taketh Vengeance? (I speak as a man:) God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?

faith the Apostle, Rom. 3.5, 6.

We deny not, that God might impose Sufferings on him that had no Sin of himself: He made his Son to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, 2 Cor. 5.21. Job's Calamities came on him by God's Permission, though he were an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed Evil, Job 1.8. that he might prove his Integrity by his great Patience. Of the Son who was born blind Christ saith, Joh. 9.3. Neither hath this man sinned, nor his Parents: that is, there was no special Sin committed by either of them, (as his Disciples deemed,) which was the immediate cause of his Blindness; but it came to pass, that the morks of God spould be made manifest in him. The Holy Martyrs suffered for Righteonsness sake, and were therefore to count it all Joy when they fell into manifold. Temptations.

But in such Evils as their Circumstances demonstrate to be from a more then common Hand of God, specially when they are publick and universal, as we are to acknowledge the Finger of God in them; so we are to discern them to be the fruit of our doings, and the work of our hands. The Scripture styles them God's Judgments; and we are sure (saith the Apostle, Rom. 2. 2.) that the Judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things. And therefore, though we are not allowed to judge of the afflicted as greater Sinners then, others, and point out them as the Causes

of common Calamities; yet we are to judge our selves, and impute the Evil, what-ever it be, to our own Sins. Moses, the man of God, in the 109. Psalm, which was made in a time of great Mortality, (such as is now with us, ) having said to God, vers. 7. We are consumed by thine Anger, and by thy Wrath we are troubled; addes, vers. 8. Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, and our

fecret Sins in the light of thy countenance.

It is true, that all outward things happen alike to all; there is, in publick Calamities especially, one event to the Righteous and to the Wicked: No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him, Eccles. 9. 1, 2. Yet even in these, and all other, that of the Prophet, Lament. 3.39,40. is necessary for every person to mind: Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his Sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Though in this day of God's Visitation we may discern many common and open Sins, the increase of which may be judged the Cause wherefore God brings this fore Scourge of the Pestilence, in such a manner, at such a time, in those places on which it lights, confidering that God shoots not ar Rovers, but at a certain Mark; ( and so the consideration of the Practices of the Persons and Places may justly lead us to determine, that such Sins as have been by them and there committed are the Sins God punisheth, for instance, the Uncleanness, Riot, Profaneness, and other Sins committed among us, have brought down this Vengeance on our great City:) yet fince there are particular Sins also with us, and there is never a one of us but hath his fecret Sins, (perhaps our Security, putting far from us the Evil day, living in Ease and Pleasure, Unmercifulness, and Insensibleness of the Afflictions of others, fecret Atheism, Lukewarmness in Religion, leaving our first Love, Backsliding from our Professi-

ever.

Profession, secret Hypocrisie, Formality without the Power of Godliness, which may cause Christ to spue us out of his mouth; ) it is necessary that the best of us make a strict Enquiry into our own Bosome-sins, and resolve that God, by this his Judgment on others, calls our Sins to Remembrance, and presset us to justifie him, and to betake our selves to his Mercy, as the Psalmist here, Let thy Mercy speedily prevent us. Which leads me to the

## II. OBSERVATION.

That the Removing of the Calamities which are inflicted by God, when he remembers mens Sins, is the effect of God's tender Mercies.

So it is expressly said, Lament. 3. 22, 23. It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions sail not. They are new every morning: great is thy Faithfulness. Vers. 32. Though he cause Grief, yet will he have Compassion according to the multitude of his Mercies. And hereto accord very many speeches of God concerning himself: That he is the Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin; as he says in his solemn Proclamation to Moses, Exod. 34.6, 7. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, Mic. 7. 18.

Hence it is that the Holy Writers, and all the Saints, do still celebrate his Mercies, as being tender, abundant, free, rejoycing against Judgment: and, to instance in no other, there is a whole Psalm, (136.) in which the close of every verse is this, For his Mercy endureth for

ever. And this Mercy of his is the Reason of all those works of Goodness he doeth, as to the World in general, in causing his Sun to rise on the Just and Unjust, and being kind to the Unthankfull and to the Evil, Luk. 6.35. so as that his tender Mercies are over all his works, Pfal. 145. 9. fo chiefly to his own people, all whose Deliverances and Benefits are made the fruits of his Mercy. Above all, the great Redemption in Christ, of which the Apostle thus speaks, Eph. 2. 4, 5. God who is rich in Mercy, out of the great Love wherewith he hath loved is, even when we were dead in Sins. bath quickned us together with Christ, is the effect of the highest, most transcendent and everlasting Mercy. Hence in all their Praises, the Godly remember his Mercies: as the Prophet Isa. (63.7.) I will mention the Loving-kindness of the Lord, and the Praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us; and the great Goodness towards the bouse of Israel, which he bath bestowed on them, according to his Mercies, and according to the multitude of his Loving-kindnesses.

In like manner, their Obsecrations are by the Mercies of God, Rom. 12.1. as of all things most dear to them: and their Prayers are still ensorced by minding God of his Mercies. So in the Penitentiall Psalms: Psal. 6.2. Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; vers. 4. Return, O Lord, deliver my Soul, O save me for thy Mercy's sake; Psal. 51. 1. Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy Loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Transgressions; and so in the rest. There is scarce a Psalm of Petition, or Thanksgiving, or Narration of God's Acts, but there is some, if not frequent, mention of God's Mercy and tender Compassion, as the Source of all the Help his people have, and the Ground

Ground of their Hope for what they want. And the

Reasons hereof are,

1. Because without God's Mercy there would be no Forgiveness of Sin, and without Forgiveness of Sin there would be no Deliverance from Evil. Where the Holy Scripture mentions Redemption from Evil, it ascribes it to the Forgiveness of Sin. The Redemption in Christ is in the Forgiveness of Sins, Eph. 1. 7. Forgiving of Sins and Healing Diseases are conjoyned Psal. 103. 3. And Forgiving of Sins is derived from Mercy: He pardoneth Iniquity, because he delighteth in Mercy, Mich. 7. 18. Of his own Mercy he saved us, Tit. 3. 5. Therefore à primo ad ultimum, those follow one another; Redemption from Evil follows Forgiveness of Sins, and Forgiveness of Sins God's tender Mercies. And therefore it is God's tender Mercy that Evils are removed, as taking away the Cause, whereupon the Effect ceaseth.

2. But farther, All Influx of Good is from God's tender Mercy. There is nothing that doth or can make God a Debtor to any, but his tender Mercy. Man is a poor helpless thing of himself: the best of men, in their estate antecedent to God's Help, are more destitute of power to help themselves then the very Brutes; whether in respect of Naturals, or Spiritualls. As we are born into the world, we are, as God faid of the Israelites, Ezek. 16.6. as a young Child exposed, polluted in our own blond; without the Mercy of God teaching, strengthening, and providing for us, certain to perish. There is none eye that pities us, to doe us any good, without God. It is his Mercy that the Sun shineth on us, that the Air refresheth us, our Food nourisheth us, our Cloaths warm us; that we have Strength to act, Wisedom to direct us. It is his Mercy that our Parents take care of us, that our Friends comfort a fort us, our Enemies pity us, Devils are curbed from hurting us, Ministers preach to us the way of Life, the Holy Angels assist us, the Spirit of God guides us, and, which is the Mercy of Mercies, that the Son of God is given for us and to us, and with him all things: and so he crowns us with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies. In a word, all the Safety and Benefits we enjoy, which are innumerable, are Fruits springing from the tender Mercies of God as the Root. Mercy is the Principle which sets God on work to doe all the good he doeth. This is evidenced from the

### III. OBSERVATION.

He makes the low Condition of Supplicants his Season

of ministring Help.

This is acknowledged Psal. 136. 23. Who remembred us in our low estate; for his Mercy endureth for ever. In another Pfalm (107.) throughout, this way of God's Providence is exemplified in his dealing with Pilgrims, Prisoners, Captives, Diseased persons, Mariners, oppressed Subjects; to all which, and all other sorts of dejected and disconsolate persons, when their Case is deplorable, when they are destitute of all other Remedies, when all things are dark and cloudy about them, when they are reduced to extremities, and are at their wits end, God steps in, and by some way unthought of, unexpected, ministers seasonable supply, timely Succour and Relief. The Scripture is full of Instances, in the case of Jacob, David, Jonah, Paul, and many others. Besides the famous Instances of old, of Rain sent to Antoninus his Army upon the Prayers of the Christians; of Help to Constantine against Maxentius, to Theodosius against Eugenius: and of late, our own great Deliverances, from the Spanish Invasion in Eighty eight,

of the King and Parliament from the Gunpowder-Treafon; and, which is most apposite to the present state of things, the Deliverance of our Metropolis from the sweeping Pestilence in the memory of many of us. These and innumerable more Experiences (of which no considerate Christian that hath been at Death's door, or under Agony of Spirit, or in any other low Estate, wants Instances, ) do abundantly prove this Truth, That Man's Extremity is God's Opportunity.

And the Reason is, Because then Mercy appears to be Mercy; God is then manifested to be what he is styled to be, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation, 2 Cor. 1.3. As the Devil then appears to be a Devil, when he takes advantage of our Weakness, to hurt us: so God appears to be God, by making our Infirmity the Reason of his Help. Thereby he encourageth us to trust in him, engageth us to Thankfulness, and to Obedience. That is the Harvest-time. when God reaps most Glory; and we carry home with Toy, after our Mourning, our Sheaves of Assurance of his Salvation. S. Paul therefore tells us, that in his Trouble in Asia, he was pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life, had the sentence of death in himself, to this end, that he should not trust in himself, but in God which raiseth the dead: and then God delivered him from so great a death, and did still deliver him, and therefore he trusted that he would yet deliver him, 2 Cor. 1.8, 9, 10. Such feasonable Help in Extremities God would therefore have observed, and kept upon Record, and always acknowledged.

The Israelites were commanded to present their basket of First-fruits, and to make this Confession solemnly, Deut. 26. 5, &c. A Syrian ready to perish was my Father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned

there with a few, and became there a Nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil intreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard Burthens. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our Fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our Affliction, and our Labour, and our Oppression, and brought us thence into this place. Such Providences of God he requires us to observe, that we may understand his Loving-kindness, Psal. 107. 43. that we may be excited to cry unto the Lord in our Trouble, who delivereth us out of our Distress. Which brings us to the

### IV. OBSERVATION.

That Bewailing of Sins, and humble and instant Supplication, are the proper and effectuall Remedies against

the Calamities incumbent on God's people.

Hereunto we are directed Lament. 3. 40, 41, 42. Let us fearch and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the Heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled; thou hast not pardoned. Thus did David, when God fent a Plague on Israel, and swept away 70000, 1 Chron. 21. 16, 17. He and the Elders of Israel, cloathed in Sackeloath, fell on their faces, confessed the Sin which was the Cause of it, prayed God to remove the Pestilence; and he was intreated of them. When there was a Plague upon Israel for their Murmuring, Aaron took Incense, and made an Atonement for the people: and he stood between the living and the dead; and the Plague was stayed, Num. 16. 47, 48. At another time, when the Israelites provoked God to Anger with their Inventions, and the Plague brake in upon them, Phineas stood up, and executed Judgment, or prayed; and the Plague was stayed, Psal. 106. 29,30.

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This Antidote hath in all Ages been found a Prefervative against the Plague, and the most effectual Medicine to cure it. Phylicians prescribe many good Receipts: and Magistrates doe well, to use all the best means they can to hinder the spreading of Infection: and justly are those destroyed as Pests of Mankind, who willingly infect the found, or carelesly permit those things which may poison others. They that are unmercifull to the Sick, suffering or causing them to perish by their negligence and ill usage, are justly cenfured as Promoters of the Contagion. But the truly Penitent, who confesseth and forsaketh his Sins, the importunate believing Petitioner at the Throne of Grace, the zealous and impartiall Magistrate, who executeth Judgment against those venomous Sins that provoke God to shoot his deadly Arrows against us, are the best and most prevalent Instruments to cure the Plague, and to restore Health in our dwellings. On the other fide, the unchast, intemperate, unrighteous, covetous Worldlings; the Atheistical, proud, profane, the deceitful Hypocrites, that are impenitent, that confess not their Sins, nor forfake their evil ways; those that hang down their heads for a day, forbear a Meal or two, and perhaps come to hear, but are not affected with God's Hand, nor sensible of the Evil of their ways, that reform not their ungodly and unrighteous Life, that use other means to preserve them, but seek not to God in good earnest for Pardon of Sins, that appear here for company, but do not execute Justice, nor shew Mercy to others; These are so far from being instrumentall to removing the Plague, that they rather cause the continuance and the increase of it: it being God's course, not to turn away his Anger, but to stretch out his Hand still in punishing, when people turn not to him that smiteth them, nor seek the Lord of hoasts, APPLI-Ifa. 9. 12, 13.

## APPLICATION.

And now to apply what hath been faid to the present work. What the Preachers of God's Word have often foretold us, that for the Sins of this Land, and especially of the people of our great City, we had reason to expect some great Scourge, the same is now come up-The destroying Angel hath drawn his Sword. hath killed thousands already; the Plague is not onely begun, but hath wasted some part of that City; great Terrour is upon us; many fly thence, and perhaps die by the way, or live to infect other places; Houses are emptied, Streets untroden, Markets without Sellers and Buiers: a heavy dolefull Disease is come upon us. Who is sohard-hearted, so Atheisticall, as not to see the Hand of God in all this? The Preachers from the Pulpit foretold it. Any who was acquainted with the Holy Scripture, with the way of God's Judgments in our own or former times, might see, that our excess of profane Swearing, Contempt of Religion and the Word of God, our unmeasurable Pride, Vanity, Luxury, in Meat, Drink, Apparel, sensuall Pleasures, our Contentions, our Oppressions, our Hatred, Divisions, Unmercifulness, and all forts of Vices, continually shewing themselves openly among us, would be the Seed out of which this or the like Calamity would at length be produced. And yet where is the person that laies this to heart, as an effect of Divine Vengeance, and the Fruit of his Sin? Who is there that fearcheth and trieth his maies, that is sensible of the Plague of his own Heart, that with repenting Ephraim smites upon his thigh, that repents him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Who is there that either fears God the more, or prays the more, or amends his waies the more? Are

Are not our Pride, Fulness of bread, Wantonness, Unmercifulness, yea, which is worse, our Cursing, Swearing, Lying, Rage, Blasphemy, Lewdness, as much as before? Do we not (to the Prophet's phrase) every one turn yet to our course, as the Horse rusheth into the battel? Have not we yet such an unsanctified, unhumbled spirit, as to deride Preachers Monitions, to slight God's Judgments, to harden one another in Sin, and so to disappoint God's Design in this Visitation, which should awaken us from our Security, humble us under his mighty Hand, bring us on our knees in earnest Supplications, teach us to fear Sin, learn us to doe well, lest a worse thing happen to us?

If it be so with us, what can be expected, but that our seeming Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer this day should become Sin to us, and be so far from averting the present Evil, as that it will provoke the Divine Vengeance to punish us yet seven times more for our Sins? For sure, when one Judgment doth not cause us to return to God, he will send another. The more Warnings God gives us, if the fire of God's Wrath be not quenched by our Repentance and Supplications, it will burn the more fiercely. It is in vain for us to imagine, that by any other means we can prevent our Danger: this is the onely safe course for our Preservation. And therefore let us be perswaded this day to draw nigh to God, that he may draw nigh to us.

own waies; finding out and confessing to God, with serious Compunction of Heart and Remorse of Conscience, not onely our open, but also our secret Sins. Know that the revenging Eye of God cannot be deceived with Shews: that he knows the secretest Motions of our Hearts, the most hidden Practices of our Lives. Know that it is in vain to strive with him; that it is Madnesto

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provoke him to Jealousy, unless we were stronger then he in. And therefore it is no better then Folly and Madness, to be superficiall in this business of Searching, Confessing, Repenting of our Sins. We say, Non est tutum ludere cum Sacris; We must not triste in things of God, we must not sport with God.

Neither must we onely be sensible of our own personall sins, but of the Sins of others; our Governours, our Neighbours, our Foresathers Sins. David's Sin may bring a Plague on the People. We are to mourn and be humbled for them especially which goe unpunished,

which cause the Land to mourn.

2. We must goe on to cry mightily to God, as the Ninevites did. The Pardoning of great Sins, the removing of great Plagues, require great Mercies, and importunate Suing. Now must the Bridegroom goe forth of his chamber, and the Bride out of her closet. The Ministers of the Lord, all forts of persons, old and young, must cry with Tears and Supplications, Spare us, O Lord, and give not thy Heritage to reproach. We must lift up our hands with our hearts to God in the Heavens. as sensible that nothing but his Mercy can save us; that he is ready to hear and help, when we hope in his Mercy; that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jefus Christ the Righteons, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins. We must mind God of his former Mercies; trust on him, as one that hath promised to deliver us when we call on him in the day of Trouble; look unto him with Patience, as being affined that they that mait for him shall not be ashamed.

3. We must adde an unmovable Resolution to amend our waies, to sin no more as we have done, to abhor Evil, and cleave to that which is good; in Duties of Resignon, Prayer, Hearing God's Word, Praising of God, Thanksgiving, to be more frequent and serious; to

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cleanse our hands, and to purify our hearts from doublemindedness; to be upright in what we doe, walking humbly with our God, and feeking his Glory all our daies. And in two things especially we are to deal rightly with 1. In doing Justice to others: if we be publick persons, by punishing Sin, and giving just Sentence for all that are wronged; if private, by restoring that which is not our own, and righting those we have injured. Remember that God abhors ex Rapina Holocaustum, Robbery for Burnt-offerings; and that the Prayers of the unjust are an Abomination to the Lord. 2. In shewing Mercy to others. We are to be mercifull, as our heavenly Father is mercifull; chiefly when we beg Mercy at his hands. This is a necessary Duty for a Fasting-day. Isa. 58.6,7. Is not this the Fast, &c? Now especially is a time for this Duty, in which there is so much Want, by reason of the great Poverty that is come upon Families shut up; now that Trading is decayed, and Provision so dear, and difficult to be got. As you cry to God for Help, so do others Necessities cry to you for Relief. Have you then Bowels of Mercy for them, as you would have Bowels of Mercy in God towards you. Let your hand be open to them, as you would have God's hand ready for you. So may you expect Preservation in this time of Danger; at least you may be affured, however you speed now, of Life eternall hereafter. Which God grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

The many transaction the same of the Alexander of the Alexand recommendation of the best of converse the less time for this Ducy, in which there while not not up to be a most tol both or you know. evitorion for Relat. Have you then Bowels of Maev for them, as you would have howe's of piercy in God covereds were. The row hard be or on to these, as you would have Go I also I was the Sound bloom pay as ที่ - เราการ เกิด เกาเมาะที่ 1 ตะ กอยนามโดก เกิดการการการ les even may be stated, loyer, a ven ledel now, of Life otened hereafter. Which Cod mark o'v. Auten.

### LAZIA BED

#### THE

# HEAVENLY CALL.

# The Twelfth SERMON.

HEBREWS iv. 7.

To Day if you will bear his Voice, barden not your Hearts.

HIS Passage is a Quotation, with an Application of it beyond what at first the words seemed to import. They were spoken by David; but intended as a Monition to hear the Gospell. They are a Summons or Writ of Appearance served upon Jews and Gentiles, limiting them to a certain Day of accepting the offer of the Gospell, without delay upon pretence of Business, Prosit, or Pleasure, by themselves, without Attorney or Proxy. The thing to be done is bearing his Voice: the means thereunto is (Removere probibens) to remove that which might hinder, the Hardness of the Heart.

This being applied to the Gospell of Christ, inti-

mates,

1. That the Preaching of the Gospel is the Voice of

2. That it is to be beard.

3. That it is to be heard to day.

4. That, to the end it may be heard to day, the Heart must not be hardned.

## I. OBSERVATION.

That the Gospel of Christ is the Voice of God.

It is the express Assertion of S. Peter, I. Epist. 1.25. alluding to Isa. 40.8. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever: and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you. Which is demonstratively consir-

med ,

1. By its own Evidence; in respect of which it is termed the Light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Image of God, 2 Cor. 4.4. It is not denied that it is the hidden Wisedom of God in a mystery, which none of the Princes of the world knew; yea it is fuch aseve hath not feen, ear hath not beard, nor bath it entred into the heart of man, without Revelation from him, it being not an humane Invention, but a Divine Contrivance: yet shining forth in the Preaching of it by Christ and his Ministers, it exhibits such a Light as can come from none but God. It is not like any Talmudicall Fable. or Popish Legend, or Poeticall Fiction, or witty Romance, the Brats of mens Fancy, or fubtile Composure: But it is for the matter of it sutable to God's Wisedom. Goodness, and Holiness; agreeable to the undoubted Oracles of God committed to the Jews; foretold and prefigured by the Prophecies of the Old Teltament, and Shadows of the Law. Whence S. Peter tells us 2 Pet. 1. 16. We have not followed cumingly-devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jefus Christ; and verl. 19. that Christians had a more sure word of Prophecy, to which they were to take heed, as unto a Light that foineth in a dark place; adding that the Evidence of the Gospell is as the Dawning of the Day, and the Ariling of the Day-

far in the Christians bearts.

2. And in truth, the Gofpel appears to be fuch by its Effects. It doeth to the Heart what the Stars and the Sun do to the Eves; it enlightens, it enlivers, it warms, it spirits the Heart. It doeth that which Natural Reason could not doe. Philosophy could not attain to, the Law could not accomplish: It discovers our felves to our felves; the Being. Properties, Counfels of God to us. It turns the Heart from Sin begets Men to God, fills the Soul with heavenly comforts, ftrengthens and quickens the Spirit to doe the Will of God, and to fuffer for his Name. It makes men to be of composed Spirits, and celestiall Conversation, beyond what either Stoicall Philosophy or Rabbinicall Dictates could raise men unto: to be more noble and heroical then those renowned Worthies or Patriots. which either Greeks or Romans have admired and magnified.

3. And (which puts it out of all doubt to be Divine ) it hath fuch Attestations as could be given by none but God. For befides what John the Baptiff faw and heard at Chrift's Baptifin ; befides what S. Peter and his Collegues restified, who were Eve-witnesses of bis Majefty, when he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came fuch a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, 2 Pet. 1. 17. belides all this, the Miracles which Christ and his Apostles did so convinced Nicodemus, that he confessed. We know that thou art a Teacher come from God : for no man can doe these Miracles which thou doest, except God be with him, Joh. 3, 2. And that I may not be infinite in this, (though of all Points it be of most concernment, the Oist of the Spirin, the fulfilling of Prophecies delivered by Chrift, the domin

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wonderous Success of the Gospell in converting the World, the direfull Judgments of God on the Opposers and Persecuters of Christ, Christians, and the Gospell, both Jews and Romans, do abundantly witness the Divine Originall of the Gospell of Christ, and that it is the Voice of God; which therefore is to be heard: and that is the

## II. OBSERVATION.

That God's Voice is to be heard.

This not onely the Holy Scriptures tell us, but even the Light of Nature dictates. When Ebud told Eglon King of Moab, that he had a Message from God to him: he arose out of his Seat, Judg. 3. 20. All Nations repair to the Oracles of their Gods, and take Counsel from them. When Cornelius was advertised that S. Peter was sent to him from God; with all submission and devotion he attends him, telling him, We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of

God, Act. 10. 33.

And great Reason it should be so. He is a God of Truth, that neither can be deceived, nor deceive; and therefore it is of greatest advantage to us to hear him. Mens foolish Hearts hearken oftentimes to them that statter them, that speak pleasing things; but it is to their Ruine. The Devil's Oracles are so ambiguous, so false, that they delude, they corrupt men to their Perdition. But God's Voice, the Gospell of Christ, never misguides, never perverts, but leads men into all Truth, for their present Benefit, and their everlasting Happiness. Besides, God is a powerfull Lord, the one-ly Law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy, Jam. 4.12. It is not safe to slight him: it is the onely way of Salvation to hearken to his Voice. We have so

much wit, as, however we contemn our Inferiour's or Equall's words, yet not to neglect our Superiour's Commands or Counfells. Who is there that dares defoise the Sayings of a Judge on the Bench? or of the King on his Throne? How obsequious in Attention, how regardfull in Observance of what such Potentates say to them, are all their Subjects? They are aware that they speak with authority; that they have Punishments and Rewards to accompany their Commands. It is much more so with God: He hath power of Life and Death, Heaven and Hell are at his disposall. And therefore it is necessary that his Voice should be heard, which is a glorious Voice, a mighty Voice; heard with the Heart as well as the Ear, with Subjection of Soul as well as Reverence of Body; and that without any demurr or delay, to day, as it is in my Text. Which brings us to the next or

## IH. OBSERVATION.

That the Gospell is to be heard to day.

By faying to day, the Holy Ghost (faith the Apostle) limits a certain Day in which the Voice of God is to be heard: which intimates, that there is a day, and but a day, fixt for this transaction. To day implies something inclusive, and fomething exclusive. That which is included is the Opportunity, and the Duration: That which is excluded is the Night fucceeding the Day, and all Duration after, even to Eternity. The Opportunity of hearing is, while the Gospel is preached; while the Spirit moves upon our Hearts; while Christ stands at the door and knocks, that we may open the door, and he come in, and sup with us, and we with bim. While the Ministers of Reconciliation, as Embasfadours for Chrift, as Workers together with God, befeech

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us that we receive not the Grace of God in vain, is the accepted time, and the day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2.

It was Jerusalem's Day, the time of her Visitation, while Christ would have gathered them to him, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings. It was the Old World's Day, while the Spirit of God did strive with them, while Noah prepared the Ark, and was a Preacher of

Righteoulnels to them.

The utmost extent is but during this present Life. Perhaps it may be shortned by our Obstinacy, by our Grieving the Spirit of God, which moves God to withdraw the tender of Reconciliation, and the Inslux of his Spirit, and to leave us to the Blinding of the God of this world, and the Obduration of our own Hearts. The time after this Life is quite excluded in this business. I must work, saith Christ, (Joh. 9. 4.) the works of him that sent me, while it is Day; (that is, mbile I am in this world, as he expressed it vers. 5.) the Night

cometh, when no man can work.

As in Sales by the Candle, he that bids not the price before the Candle goes out, buies nothing: so it is in this great Merchandise of the rich Pearl of the Kingdome of Heaven; he that fells not all before his Light is extinguished, can never purchase the Inheritance. There is no knowledge, no wisedome, no operation to this end, in the Grave whither we goe. Neither Priefts Maffes, nor Monks Prayers, nor large Alms, nor continual Obits, can buy Remission of Sins, or recover a man from the Infernal place, or state of eternall Punishment, when once the Grave hath shut its mouth upon him. In the Grave there is no Remembrance of God to this effect; there is no Praise of him, or hearing of his Voice to Salvation: much less at the day of Judgment. When once the Master of the house is risen up, (faith our Saviour, Luk. 13. 25, 27, 28.) and bath But

short to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of Iniquity: there remains nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth. If men sumber and sleep, and get not Oil in their Lamps and Vessels, no admission will be for them into the Wedding-chamber when the Bridegroom comes.

It will not consist with God's Majesty and Honour to be always waiting upon us to doe us good. He is long patient; but (Lasa Patientia sit Furor) his injured and abused Patience ends in Fury. If while God assigns a Day to hear his Voice, we make it a day of Provocation, he will swear in his wrath we shall never enter

into his Reft.

Besides, the longer we deser the accepting of God's Grace, the more we make our selves incapable of hear-kening to God's Voice. Custome in Sin hardens us therein. They that are used to doe Evil, hardly ever learn to doe well: Often Sinning makes Sin habitual, and that begets Hardness of Heart: this must be removed, if we will hear God's Voice; which I propounded for the

## IV. OBSERVATION ... To Coming

That we may hear God's Voice to day, our Hearts

must not be hardned.

The Heart, in Scripture acception, comprehends all the inward Intellectual Faculties, the Understanding, Memory, Conscience, Will, and Affections, which must concur with the Ear in hearing God's Voice. Rose 10.

17. They that had never any Preaching could never hear God's Voice. And they that have admitted it into the Ear, without opening of the inner Door of the Aa a

Heart, want the enjoyment of it. It was Lydia's happiness, that when she heard S. Paul, the Lord opened her Heart, that she attended unto the things which were Boken, Act. 16. 14. They are unhappy to whom the Lord vouchsafes not the opening of the Ear to hear his Voice: but they are most unhappy, and accursed, to whose Ears the Voice of God comes, but their Hearts are not opened to receive it. No Curse more direfull then that which our Saviour faith was fulfilled in his Auditours: By hearing they heard, and did not understand; and seeing they did see, and not perceive. For this people's Heart is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and should understand with their Heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them, Matth. 13. 14, 15.

For this reason, as the absenting from hearing of God's Voice is a damnable Sin; (they that come not to hear with their Ears, shew their Contempt of God's Grace;) so much more damnable is the hardening of the Heart, whereby the Voice of God is wilfully kept out of the Understanding, Memory, Conscience, Will, Affections, so as it cannot be feated in them, nor they guided and ruled by it. Which thing comes to pass by the Deceitfulness of Sin, as our Apostle tells us, Heb. 3. 13. Love of any Sin, adherence to any Errour opposite to God's Voice, will harden the Heart, so as neither to admit the enlightning Brightness of it into the Eye of the Mind. nor the foftning Virtue of it into the Will, to make it pliable. Pride and Self-dependence were two of the chief Causes of the Jews hardening their Hearts against the Voice of God in the Preaching of the Gospell by Christ and his Apostles. How can ye believe, (faith our Saviour, Joh. 5. 44.) which receive honour one of another, and feek not the Honour which cometh from God onely?

onely? Rom. 10. 3. They being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteonsness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness

of God, Rom. 10. 3.

Thus at this day do Popish Justitiaries, who place their Righteousness in their own good Merits. All ignorant people, who are wedded to vain Superstitions. harden their Hearts against the Voice of the Gospell, so as not to be humbled for Sin, as the penitent Publican, but to boast themselves, as the proud Pharisee. They receive not Christ joyfully, with finfull Zacchaus; but reject the offers of Grace, like those who judged themselves unmorthy of eternall life, Act. 13.46. In like manner, the Cares of this World, the Deceitfulness of Riches, the Pleasures of this life, with other Lusts, choak the word of the Kingdome, to as that it becomes unfruitfull, Matth. 13. 22. Luk. 8. 14. Hence it is that worldlyminded men and voluptuous livers harden their Hearts against the Warnings of God's Word, slight the Tender of the Gospell, imploy their wits to discredit it, hearken to Seducers, which foment their Lusts, and pervert their Understanding. As redundance of Choler in the Stomach makes it cast up the best Meat as unsavoury: so where the Heart is filled with finfull Lufts, or erroneous Principles, they make the most precious Truths of the Gospell to be loathed and refused. Vicious minds expell holy Doctrines: and therefore till the Heart be foftned, the Motions of God's Spirit will not be entertained.

## APPLICATION.

your selves, and examine whether it be not so with you. The Voice of God in the Gospell of Christ hath been

been so evidently demonstrated to the world, that never was there anything which was published with more manifest proofs, and Divine infallible assurance of its Truth. And to take away all doubt of Imposture in the Publishers, Testimony hath been given to their Sincerity therein, by their relinquishing all outward desirable Advantages, even with the sacrificing of their own Lives.

And to you of this Nation it hath been held forth with much Perspicuity, pressed with much Earnestness. But do you hear it? do you perceive this to be the time of your Visitation, your Day? Do you not harden your Hearts as in the Provocation? Do not your proud Spirits think it below you to stoop to it? May we not say as once the Jews did, Which of the Rulers believe on him? Do we not find the Poor receive the Gospell, when the Rich are sent empty away? Surgunt Indosti, & rapiunt Colum; the Unlearned rise up, and take Heaven by violence, when the reputed Wise goe on in their waies to Perdition? Do we not love the Praise of Men more then the Praise of God? Do not your love of Pleasures and the Cares of this world chook the Word, and make it unfruitfull?

I come not to accuse you, but would have you judge your selves, as knowing that you shall be judged by the Lord, and, if you prevent it not by self-judging, condemned with the World. Take it as a warning, out of a most ardent desire I have to save your Souls, that I tell you, that there are shrewd Symptoms of the Hardness of your Heart, and Averseness from hearing God's Voice; in that places of Pastime and Pleasure, houses of Good-sellowship, are so much frequented as they are, and the Church of God neglected; in that Romances, profane Histories, yea Discourses savouring of Atheism, are bought up, and read with more delight then the Bible, or any other Holy Writings; we take

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more pleasure to furnish our Fancy, then to rectify our Conscience.

Are you not sensible that God hath limited you a certain time to hear his Voice? that your daies are numbred, and your months, that you cannot pass? that while the Gospell is preached, is your Day of Salvation? that if the Sun of your Life be set, the Day of the Gospell darkned over you, there will be no time left to make your Peace, to fave your immortall Spirits? that if you harden your Hearts, there remains nothing after this Day but Hell and eternall Judgment? Think seriously then upon your Condition, and while it is called to day, provide for Eternity. Hear God's Voice readily and constantly. Harden not your Hearts by Pride, Luxury, Covetousness, Superstition, or any other evil Lusts. Submit your Understandings to God's Wisedom. Retain his Word in your Memory and Conscience. Believe him against your own Fancies. Conform your Wills to his. Receive his Truth in the love of it, and you shall be faved by it. Which he grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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THE

# DANGER

OF

# Abusing Grace.

## The Thirteenth SERMON.

ROM. vi. 1. and part of 2.

What shall we say then? shall we continue in Sin,
that Grace may abound?

God forbid.

To acquit the Gospel (which he preached) from the Exceptions and Obloquies which it, and the Preachers of it, were obnoxious to, and to demonstrate the Wisedom and Power of God in his proceedings concerning it, S. Paul (in this Epistle, written to the greatest and most intelligent People of the Gentiles,) declares both the extreme Corruptions of the whole World, and the Wrath of God impendent on them for that reason; as also the unparallel'd Longanimity of God, in bearing with such a provoking Generation, whom Hell had long waited for; and especially, the incomprehensible Philanthropy or Loving-Bb kindness

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kindness of God towards men, whom, though Enemies, though weak to resist him, he not onely spareth, but also reconcileth to himself by the Bloud of his own Son, and proclaimeth his free Pardon to all that receive

him, by his Apostles.

But lest Mercy abused should instante the Wrath of God so much the more; lest the sweetest Meat, undigested through a Surfeit, should be putressed in the Stomach, and turn to the most deadly Poison; he in this and the following Chapters warns us of the ill Inference which men may make from so great Goodness: and he begins at the words now read unto you, What shall we say then? shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God sorbid.

In which words are two Questions: the former where of is onely a form of Transition, propounding it to the consideration of those to whom he writes, that they with him should bethink themselves what Determination to make upon his former Declaration, What shall we say then? If this be the state of affairs between God and us, it concerns us to heed what thereupon we

resolve to doe.

The other Question is more particular; Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? Shall this be the Inference we make from it? The Answer is negative; Absit, God forbid. Let no so absurd, so unworthy an Abuse of so rich Mercy be yielded to; though it be never so plausibly urged by our carnal Reason, and our corrupt Affections would incline us to embrace the Motion.

In this paffage of Scripture these following Conclusi-

ons are couched.

1. That God's dealing with Sinners according to the Gospel of Christ is out of his abundant Grace.

2. That the corrupt Heart of man is apt thereupon

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to harden it self by Continuance in Sin.

3. That such a Determination is a most foolish and pernicious Abuse of God's superabundant Grace.

Of these in their order.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That God's dealing with Sinners according to the

Gospel of Christ is out of his abundant Grace.

That abundant Grace which is here supposed is the fame with that which he speaks of Rom. 5. 20, 21. Moreover, the Law entred, that the Offence might abound: but where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: That as Sin hath reigned unto Death; even so might Grace reign through Righteonsness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Which elsewhere, Ephes. 1. 7. he terms the Riches of his Grace; In whom we have Redemption through his blond, the forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace. And Eph. 2. 4,5,7. God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. And Eph. 3.8. it is termed the unsearchable Riches of Christ.

All which Expressions are true, without an Excess of speech, if we consider either the State of mankind antecedent to the exhibition of this Grace; or the Ef-

fects thereof, or the Means of exhibiting it.

For what more deplorable Condition (except that of Devils) could the World be in, then it was in before the exhibiting of the Divine Evangelical Grace of Christ to the sons of men? They had all sinned, and came short of the Glory of God: they were concluded, as Malesactours condemned, under Sin, under the Curse of Bb 2

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the Law; dead in Trespasses and Sins: they were alienated from the Life that is in God; Enemies in their minds by wicked works; foolish, disobedient, serving divers Lusts, hatefull, and hating one another; children of Disobedience, of Darkness, who walked after the course of the Prince of the power of the Air: they were carried away after dumb Idols; were Vassals of Satan, and children of Wrath by nature.

And yet even to such did the Loving-kindness of God towards Man appear, so as to reconcile the world unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them. He made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin; that we might be made his Righteousness in him: and committed the Ministry of Reconciliation to chosen Vessels, which might bear his Name to the Gentiles, and bring Light and Salvation

to fuch persons.

It was no small Testimony of his Goodness, that (even then when they were such; when they walked in their own ways) he gave them Rain from Heaven, and fruitfull seasons, filling their bearts with food and gladness; that he caused his Sun to shine upon such unjust people, as were both Jews and Gentiles. The former of which were degenerated from the Integrity of Abraham; and though claiming the privilege of his Children, yet in reality were of their Father the Devil, whose works they did; except a few names, that waited for the Consolation of Israel: the rest of them were a Generation of Vipers, full of Hypocrific and Cruelty, Unpeaceable, Ambitious, seeking the Praise of men, not the Honour that cometh of God; such as would compass sea and land to make one Proselyte, and having wone him to them, made him twofold more the child of Hell then themselves. The other were filled with all Unrighteousnoss, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Enuy, Murther, Debate, Deceit, Malignity; Whisperers, BackSermon XIII. The Danger of abusing Grace. 189

Backbiters, Haters of God, despightfull, proud, Boasters, Inventers of evil things, disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant-breakers, without natural Affection, implacable, unmercifull, Rom. 1.29, 30, 31. Yet even such as these he washed, he sandissed, he justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by his Spirit.

It might rather have been expected, that he should have repented that he had made them, and have executed his Wrath on them, as he did on the world of the ungodly in Noah's time, by a Deluge of water, to wash away from the Earth that Dunghill and filth of evil Imaginations and wicked Works that had polluted the whole Earth; or should have rained Fire and brimstone. from Heaven, to burn up, and so to take away, those unclean Sodomites, those brutish Dogs and Swine. which filled the World. He might justly have caused the Earth to open its mouth, and swallow up the Inhabitants of the world, so as that they should go down quick into Hell, as it did the Families of Korab, Dathan, and Abiram. He might have sworn in his Wrath. ( as he did concerning the Rebellious Israelites, ) that they should never enter into his Rest. They and we in all Generations succeeding might have expected to suffer the Vengeance of eternal fire.

But O Altitudo, O the depth of the riches both of the Wisedom and Knowledge and Love of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out? Even in this desperate State, when Iniquity was at the height, when the Sins of men were ripe, the Harvest come to its full growth, when they lay weltring in their own bloud, he said unto such out-cast, helpless sons of Adam, Live: he hath swaddled, washed, nourished, decked, married to his Son such forlorn Creatures, done the greatest Good to the worst of men: he so loved the World, that he gave his onely-begotten Son, that

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whosever believeth on him, should not perish, but have Life eternal. Jesus Christ came into the world to save Sinners, (even the chiefest,) though it was foreseen, (which is next to be considered)

## II. OBSERVATION.

That corrupt Hearts will be apt, upon this gracious dealing of God, to harden themselves by continuance in Sin.

The Apostle Jude in his Epistle, vers. 4. tells us of fome ungodly men in his time, who turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness. But it is an Abuse not peculiar to those onely; it is a Disease which is hereditary. How many are there who presume on God's Mercy, though they perfift in their Impenitency? Is it not a frequent thing with many, that profane the Name of God by an hourly Abuse of it in vain Swearing, that spend a great part of their lives in Debauchery, fo as to become more like Beafts then Men, to live more Pecudum, or more Ferarum, as Sensualists, rather then Religious persons, as Devils, rather then Saints; yet to feed themselves with imaginations of God's Grace, as if God would be mercifull to fuch, Christ died for All, God would damn None? to bolfter up themselves in Sin. deluding themselves with Conceits of Pardon, if at last Gasp they can but cry Peccavi, when they love their Sin as much as they did, and grieve onely that they cannot still commit it, or that God awards Hell to the Actours of it; and cry God mercy in a faint Miserere mei, God be mercifull to me, when they have neither acquaintance with his Promife, nor any lively fense of his Love in Christ?

How great a part of the fons of men expose themselves to Temptations, and give way to finfull Compliance in Errour or unrighteous Practices, out of a fond

hope

hope of future Repentance, and easie Pardon? Not onely notorious ungodly persons, who walk in the Stubbornness of their heart, adding drunkenness to thirst, say in their heart, they shall have Peace, when God saith he will not spare them, Deut. 29. 19. bless themselves, when God curseth them: but also others, who have a Form of Godliness, without the Power, shelter themselves from Wrath, upon a mistake of God's abundant Grace. Yea, somewhat of this Leaven is hidden even in Good mens Hearts, which is apt to sour their Spirits, to pust them up with high conceits of their Happiness and Interest in God, so as to make them secure in some goings astray. Which is a foolish and pernicious Abuse of God's superabundant Grace, to be next considered.

#### III. OBSERVATION.

That it is a foolish Conceit, that we may securely continue in Sin, and expect Favour from God, because of his superabundant Grace in Christ.

This is manifest, because it is a groundless and vain Presumption; there being no Promise or other Declaration of God which assures his Grace to such persons.

Promise of Pardon of Sin is made onely to the Penitent: Mercy to him that confesseth and forsaketh his Sin.

Onely a working Faith, that is in Christ operative by Love, avails with God to the Justification of a Sinner.

New Obedience is requisite to the Continuance of our Peace with God; a holy Life, to eternal Life.

We reade of David's Forgiveness, and we reade alfo of David's Confession: he acknowledgeth his Sin, before Nathan tells him, The Lord hath put away thy Sin. We reade of God's Mercy to Manasseh: but the same Story tells us of his humbling himself first. Saint Paul was saved, though the chief of Sinners; but not

till

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Were it so that Grace were bestowed on hardned Sinners, it would be in effect a cherishing of Rebellion. When a Prince pardons a Traitour, he will first have him an humble Supplicant, lay down his Weapons, and fall prostrate at his feet. Else he should maintain Enemies, not secure his Dominion: he should, in the event, destroy himself, by saving his Foe: such Pity to them would prove Cruelty to himself.

It is so in God's Royall Government. Should he shew himself facil and forward in bestowing his most beneficial Grace on open Sinners, that persist in their Provocations, or on secret Hypocrites, that are false-hearted, he should, in stead of upholding his Kingdom, ruine it; in stead of gaining good Subjects, nourish Vi-

pers in his bosome.

It is a Maxim with him in his Holy Polity, That when the Righteons turneth away from his Righteonsness, and committeth Iniquity, his Righteousness that he hath done [hall not be mentioned: in his Trespass that he hath trespassed and in his Sin that he bath sinned, in them shall he die, Ezek. 18. 24. This is the way of God, which he counts, as it is indeed, most equall: it being altogether incongruous to God's Holiness to abett Evil. For that would foster such Conceits in men, as those were in him of whom God saith, Psal. 50.21. These things hast thou done, and I kept filence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self. Then which there is nothing more opposite to his pure Nature, nothing being more repugnant to him then Sin. Such Imputations therefore are the greatest Disparagements of God; the foulest Reproaches, the most hainous Injuries, the most monstrous Indignities that can be cast on the Divine Majesty: it being all one as to metamorphose him into a Devil.

All

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All Sin is from the Devil; and therefore for God to bestow his Grace on him that continues in Sin, were to countenance the Devil's Actings, to breed up his Brats: in stead of destroying the works of the Devil, such Indulgence would promote them. God should be an egregious Dissembler: he should in word forbid Sin, in deed command it: he should take to himself the name of a Righteous God, and act as the Authour of Sin: he should threaten Sinners as if he were in jest, not in earnest; give liberty and allowance to a dissembling Hypocrite to mock him to his face, while he makes a shew of honouring God, when he sues for his Grace, and yet in Heart derides the Word of the living God.

The Intention of God in exhibiting his surpassing Grace, is, to draw the Hearts of men by the Chords of love to him the more abundantly; that (as it is faid of that woman, Luk. 7. 47. that her Sins, which were many, were forgiven, for she loved much, ) much Love might be the fruit of much Grace. Whereas the Continuance in Sin out of the fancy of superabundant Grace, is indeed to abuse the Love of God to the increase of Hatred against him; Spider-like, to suck Poison out of that Flower which a Bee would convert to the sweetest Hony. In the end, this course is most pernicious to him that follows it; there being nothing that more alienates Affection from a person, then his abuse of Kindness. God's Love abused, turns to Rage: and none have God more incensed against them, then those that, having tasted of the good Gift of God, fall away into finfull Courses; that are so unthankfull for so great a Favour as the offer of Reconciliation, the Sacrifice of Christ, the Invitation to his Supper, to the Marriage of the Son of God, as that they chuse rather to be at home with their Oxen and Wives and Farms, or to come without a Wedding-garment, then to accept of his Mo-

tion,

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tion, and accommodate themselves to his Kindness; that having had ten thousand Talents forgiven them, take their Brother by the throat for an hundred pence.

When men despise the Riches of God's Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth them to Repentance; after their hardness and impenitent Hearts, they treasure up to themselves Wrath against the day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, Rom. 2. 4,5.

## APPLICATION.

Oh then let me, in the most tender Bowells of Compassion my Heart can be touched with, with the most serious Importunity that my words can express, with the deepest Adjuration by the most affecting things that I can mind you of, instantly press you to take heed of this most vile, ugly, dishonest, irrational, and damnable Abuse of the Divine Grace, so as to continue in Sin, that Grace may abound.

It is most meet, yea natural, that Love should beget Love, Grace should beget Observance. Is not he a most egregious Villain, that hates his own Father that begat him, that kills him that gave him Life? Is not the Lord the Rock who begat thee, the God that formed thee? And wilt thou then be so unnatural as to hate God, as thou dost, if this be thy Requital for his

Grace, to persevere in Wickedness ?

He tells thee, that he is hated, when thou lovest any thing more then him, givest his Glory to another, makest thy Belly thy God, gloriest in thy Shame, mindest earthly things: And wilt thou thus recompense so great Goodness with such extreme Badness? He saith, he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain: And wilt thou pollute the Holy Name of thy Holy Father with

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with thy impure Swearing? The carnal mind is Enmity against God, as being not subject to his Law, but inconsistent with it: And wilt thou suffer vain Thoughts to lodge in thee, fleshly Reason to sway with thee,

carnal Lusts to rule over thee?

All Benefits received engage to answerable Duty. What art thou then but a very Miscreant, that (having so much taste how gracious God is, how amply he hath vouchsafed to be bountifull to thee in giving Christ for thee, how prosufely he hath bestowed on thee the Riches of Heaven in the largess of Spiritual Blessings in heavenly things in Christ, ) dost yet side with Sin and Satan, his profest irreconcilable Enemies; that canst harbour that Enemy, which thy Allegeance to God

binds thee to purfue zealoufly unto death?

Oh that rather the Sense of God's Goodness might make us good, the Taste of his Grace might make us gracious. Surely none are worse Enemies to God, then such as have been acquainted with the excess of God's Grace in Christ, yet exceed in their obstinate perseverance in Evil: such as, when God's Grace should draw Tears from their Eyes, Sighs from their Breasts, cause Dejectedness in their Spirits by reason of their Sinning against so incomprehensible a Love, as that which he vouchsafes to the Sons of Adam in Christ, have yet a Forehead of brass, that cannot blush; glory in their Wickedness, boast of their Lewdness, and are secure in their Impenitency.

Greater Woe was to Chorazin and Bethsaida then to Tyre and Sidon, because they repented not upon such Proofs of Christ's Excellency, as would have wrought on the other. As they had been listed up to Heaven; so Christ foretells their casting down to Hell. No people in the world are likely to have a greater degree of Torment in Hell, then profane and unrighteous men

Cc 2 among

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among us, who have the greatest Proof of God's Grace

of any people on the Earth.

As then you either stand in fear of so great Damnation, or are desirous of that abundant Grace which the Gospel of Christ exhibits, abhorr the thought of Continuing in Sin, that Grace may abound. Let the Mercies of God lead you to present your Bodies a living Sacrissice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service: for that will procure his Favour here, and your Blessedness hereafter. Which he grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEQ.

THE

#### THE

# DIVINE COMPASSIONS

## The Fourteenth SERMON.

LAMENT. 111. 22.

It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not confumed, because his Compassions fail not:

Have read to you a passage out of a most dolefull Poem, composed by that Holy Prophet Jeremiah, with much Art in the four first Chapters, the order of the Hebrew Alphabet being observed in the initiall Letters of the Verses; yet with a very deep sense of God's Judgments on Judah and Jerusalem; and a tender Sympathy with them in their Affliction. He had long and often foretold those Evils would befall them, which he now saw come upon them; of quorum pars magna fuit, and in which he had a great Share: and he might well say, (Quin talia fando, temperet à lacrymis?) Who could think or speak of such things with dry Eyes, or an insensible Spirit?

This set (may I say his Muse? I should say rather) his Prophetick spirit on work, to endite and leave to the Church this Poem. In which, with much Compassion towards his Country, he bewails their Desolation: yet, with much Piety towards God, justifies him, as punishing them according to the Demerit of

Cc 3 their

their Sins; and magnifies his Goodness, as punishing them less then they deserved. Both which are expressed in the words of my Text, It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not.

And fure we may fay the like, It is of the Lord's Mercies that London and all England are not consumed by the Pestilence, because his Compassions fail not. And therefore the handling of this Passage will be apposite to the present Face of things with us, and the Occasi-

on of this Day? In it,

1. The Prophet takes notice of the Mitigation of

God's Wrath, in that they were not consumed.

2. He affigns the genuine Cause of it, the Lord's Mercies or Benignities, great Mercies: which is exclusive of any other procuring Cause that might deserve it; and intimates, that there was sufficient reason (did not his Mercies interpose) why he should have consumed them.

3. These Mercies are described, 1. By the kind of them; they were Compassions, in the Original, Bowelmercies, such as a tender Mother hath to the Child of her womb; in God, Pardoning Mercies, Relieving Mercies. 2. By the Indescribed of them: Though men fail in their Duty, though they fail in their Obedience, though they be wanting in Returning to God, though their Prayers be consumed; yet his Compassions are not consumed, and therefore they are not consumed.

And this is here alleged as a Door of Hope, (to the Prophet) that God would restore that People: for to that end are these words brought in this place, as that which follows in sour Verses of this Chapter plainly shews. From hence then, this Explication of the words being premised, these Observations do arise.

T. That

1. That the Lord, in Punishing of his People, doth

not consume them.

2. That Holy persons ascribe not the Mitigation of God's extreme Severity in his Punishments to any promeriting Cause in themselves, but confess their own Sins deserve utter Consumption.

3. That there are Mercies and Compassions in God

towards his People.

4. That thefe Mercies fail not.

5. That the Non-consumption of God's People is to

be ascribed to this.

6. That the apprehension of this encourageth them to hope and wait on God for a Consummation of their Health and Peace.

Of these I shall speak in the order propounded, and then apply them to the present state of things, and

so conclude.

## I. OBSERVATION.

That the Lord doth not, in Punishing of his People,

consume them.

This is equivalent to what God speaks in the Prophet Isaiah, (57. 16.) I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth. And he gives this Reason, For the Spirit should fail before me, and the Soul which I have made.

It is true, the Devil is a roaring Lion, that goes about, feeking whom he may devour, I Pet. 5.8. He is the Apollyon, the Abaddon, the Thief that comes not to fave, but to feeal and to kill and to destroy, Joh. 10. 10. because the Sheep are not his own. He made nothing, nor hath any Love to any thing; and therefore seeks not to help any, but to marre and doe mischief to all that God hath made. But the People of God are the work

of his hands, and the Sheep of his Pasture, Pial. 100. 2. and therefore he will have a defire to the work of his hands, Job 14.15. What is our work, we are loth to pull down. So God, doubtless, doth not delight, as Children, to make a house of Sticks, and then kick it down again. As he made Man after his own Image; To he is not easily induced to break him. He that accounts it an hainous Injury to himself, to curse Man with the Tongue, who is made after his Image, Jam. 3.9. and is so severe against what-ever shall destroy him, that it shis strict Determination, for Preservation of Mankind after the Floud, that he will not let the killing of Man go unrevenged; but enacteth this Law among his Precepts to Noah, Gen. 9. 5, 6. And furely your blond of your Lives will I require : at the hand of every Beast will I require it, and at the hand of Man; at the hands of every man's Brother will I require the Life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's bloud, by man shall his bloud be shed: for in the Image of God made he man; He doubtless is so chary of Men, as not to consume them himself utterly, till Iniquity is grown so daring, as that there is no Remedy.

His own People, it is true, do sin and provoke God, and he often brings them low; yet he doth not make an utter end of them, because they are not onely his Creatures, as others, but also his Redeemed and Chosen people. Thus the Prophet Samuel told the Israelites, I Sam. 12. 20, 22. Fear not, (ye have done all this Wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart:) For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great Name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his People.

That which a man hath purchased for himself, he will hardly let it be taken from him: with much more reluctancy will he cast it away. Though Michal had

been given to another, and was defiled, yet David would have her again, 2 Sam. 3. 19. because he had espoused her to him for an hundred Foreskins of the Philistines. How much less will God let go those whom he hath purchased by his Son's Bloud? He will not have him destroyed by our Meat, for whom Christ died, Rom. 14. 15. If any, through the Watchman's failing to warn them, perish, their bloud will be require at the Watchman's hands, Ezek. 3. 18. Which shews, that he hath a Fatherly Care of his own People, that they be not confumed. And though they provoke him, so as to cause his Anger to wax hot against them yet in the midst of Judgment, he remembers Mercy. He chastiseth as a Father; doth not exterminate or extirpate as an Enemy. If they break his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments; Then he will visit their Transgression with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Nevertheless his Loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail, Pfal. 89. 31, 32, 33. Though he make a full end of all the Nations, yet be will not make a full end of them, but correct them in measure; yet will be not leave them wholly unpunished, Jer. 46. 28. Wherein he manifests a mixture of Mercy and Justice. And therefore, in the next place,

#### II. OBSERVATION.

Holy persons ascribe not the Mitigation of God's extreme Severity in his Punishments to any promeriting Cause in themselves, but confess their own Sins deserve utter Consumption.

This was the acknowledgment of Ezra; Thou our God hast punished us less then our Iniquities deserve, Ezra 9. 13. Though the Punishment of the Jews were

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exceeding great, infomuch that our Prophet, Lament. 4. 6. compares it to the Punishment of the Sin of Sodom, and aggravates it, as secundum quid, in some respect, greater then it: yet, to speak simply and absolutely, there was an ingredient of Mercy that did allay it, and therefore they acknowledge their Sins to have deserved greater Evils then they felt. Whence in all their Addresses to God, they ascribe Righteousness to their Maker, and take all the Blame of their Sufferings on themselves. In the same Chapter, vers. 15. O Lord God of Israel, ( faith Ezra, ) thou art Righteons, for we remain yet escaped, as at this day. But most fully the Prophet Daniel, Chapter 9. 11, 12, 13, 14. We have sinned against the Lord our God: And he hath confirmed the words which he spake against us, by bringing upon us a great Evil: for under the whole Heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon ferusalem. Tet made we not our Prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our Iniquities, and understand thy Truth. Therefore bath the Lord matched upon the Evil, and brought it upon us : for the Lord our God is Righteons in all his works which he doeth; for we obeyed not his voice. See also vers. 5, 6, &c. of the same Chapter.

And indeed such Acknowledgments are necessary, and are always made by those who are wise-hearted in all Generations: for the very best of Men or People can never acquit themselves from being guilty of such Iniquities as might justly expose them to greater Wrath then they feel. There is not a Just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not, saith Solomon, Eccles. 7. 20. Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin? Prov. 20. 9. Holy Job, of whom God testistieth, that he was his Servant, none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that seared God, and eschewed Evil, Job 1. 8. though he still avouched his

his Integrity; yet when he is to speak of his Afflictions as they come from God, he is crest-fallen, lets down his Plumes, speaks in such forms as these: How should a man be just with God & If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. If I justifie my felf, mine own mouth shall condemn me : if I fay I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. If I wash my self with Snow-water, and make my hands never so clean: Tet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths shall abhor me, Job 9. 2, 3, 20, 30, 31. He makes no fuch plea for himself as the proud Phariste, that trusted in himself that he was Righteous, and despised others: nor doth he out of meer Modesty speak thus of himself, but out of the sense of the verity thereof, he confesseth concerning all the Sons of Adam, 70b 14. 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. The Septuagint reads, verl. 5. No, though his life be but one day upon earth; and after them the Ancients, Though he be but Infans unius diei, an Infant of one day.

We reade of Hezekiah, Isa. 38. 3. that he deprecated the Sentence of his Death in these words; Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight: Yet when the Sentence was reversed, he doth not ascribe it to his own desert, but, vers. 17. he thus speaks to God; Thou hast in love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy back. He doth not, like a proud Pharise, impute his Recovery to his own Righteousness; nor, like some boasting Frier, brag of his own Merits or Works of Supererogation: Such language of Self-justitiaries, such Conceits of men pussed up with arrogant Self-esteem, were far from him. He speaks like an humble Penitent, not like a vain

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Glorioso.

Glorioso. He assigns as the cause of his Recovery, not

his own Merit, but God's pardoning Mercy.

Nor can any People justly reckon their own Innocency as the cause of God's sparing them; but must (if they will speak truth) acknowledge they have deferved to be confumed. Though David, when the Pestilence was upon Ifrael, said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these Sheep what have they done? 2 Sam. 24. 17. yet that there were Iniquities in the People which occasioned David's Sin, is plain from vers. I. where it is said, that the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

The Churches of Christ in the Primitive times were the purest; yet S. Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 20, 21. faith, he feared, lest when he came to Corinth he should not find them such as he would, and that he should be found unto them such as they would not : lest there be Debates. Envyings, Wraths, Strifes, Backbitings, Whisperings, Swellings, Tumults: lest when he came again his God would humble him among them, and that he should bewail many which had sinned already, and had not repented of the

Uncleanness which they had committed.

In Christ's Survey of the Seven Golden Candlesticks, the Seven Churches of Asia, though golden or pure by his Acceptance, yet he finds much droffy stuff, their Light but dim, and almost wasted, and ready to go out; fuch Imperfections, fuch Errours, fuch Decays, fuch Practices of evil favour, as were enough to move him to extinguish their Light quite, and to remove the Candlesticks, except they repented.

It is by reason of man's deceitfull Heart, that God finds, even in the best Men and Churches, sufficient matter against them to consume them: which yet he permits by his own just Decree and wise Counsel, that he may hide Pride from man, and none might glory in bimfelf.

himself; but that his Mercies might the better be discerned. Which leads us to the

## III. OBSERVATION.

That there are Mercies and Compassions in God to-

wards his People.

It is true, Mercy and Compassion, as they are in Man, are Perturbations, which do disquiet them: Compassion in them is a dolorous Passion, arising from some appearing Evil, that is destructive, or otherwise grievous, which happens to a man undeservedly. And it is occasioned by a sense of the common Condition of men, and a possibility of the like Accident befalling themselves; as Aristotle describes it in the Second Book of his Rhetorick.

But in God, who is without Body, Parts, or Paffions, (as the First Article of the Church of England speaks,) there is no such Perturbation, no afflicting Affection: But Compassion in him is a sweet, calm, and gracious Inclination of his Will, whereby he hath regard to the

Defects and Miseries of his Creature.

This Attribute is afferted by himself, in that most majestick Proclamation of his, when he shewed his Glory, and made all his Goodness to pass before Moses, Exod. 33. 18, 19. descended in a Cloud, passed by him, and proclaimed the Name of the Lord, The Lord, the Lord God, Mercifull and Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, Exod. 34. 5, 6. The same hath been by many of the Holy Writers attested: it being the great engaging Property of God, whereby all his Creatures, chiefly his Elect, are eternally obliged to be his. Thus he is styled by the Psalmist, Psal. 116. 5. Gracious is the Lord and Righteous, yea our God is Mercifull: by S. James, (5. 11.) a God very pitifull,

and of tender Mercies, or of much Bowels of Compassion: by S. Paul, the Father of mercies, and the God of all Consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 3. rich in Mercy, Eph. 2. 4. And therefore Mercy is most truly ascribed to him: so that as Christ said, There is none Good but one, that is, God, Mark 10. 18. fo we may fay, There is none Mercifull or compassionate but one, that is, God; understanding it of the most intensive Degree, (quoad Affectum, ) in respect of the disposition of his Will to help; and of the most extensive Latitude, ( quoad Effectum, ) in respect of the Effect and working of it; for so it is universall. Psal. 145. 9. The Lord is good to All, and his tender Mercies (in some kind) are over all his works. Thy Mercy, (O Lord) is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth to the Clouds. Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains; thy Judgments are a great Deep: O Lord, thou preservest Man and Beast, Psal. 36. 5, 6. And Christ sets out the Mercifulness of God, in that he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and Unjust, Matth. 5. 45.

But his Mercies are most abundant to his own People, chiefly to his Elect; who are therefore termed Vessells of Mercy, Rom. 9. 23. on whom he bestows Mercies most freely. He saith to Moses, I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy; and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion, vers. 15. On them he bestows the sure Mercies of David, Isa. 55. 3. Not by works of Righteousness which they have done, but according to his Mercy he saves them, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5. He keeps Mercy for thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments, Exod. 20. 6. Yea, for their sakes he doth often shew Mercy to and spare those that are disobedient, in respect of outward Judgments. Thus Moses stood in the Gap, and turned away his Wrath from

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the Children of Israel. Phineas stood up, and executed Judgment, or prayed, and the Plague was stayed. David supplicated for Jerusalem, and the Angel of the Lord put up his Sword, and the Pestilence was stayed. Daniel prayed, and obtained the Return of the Tems from Captivity.) And thus still God does to his People, in the midst of Judgment he remembers Mercy. He doth not always chide, nor keep his Anger for ever, Pfal. 103. 9. He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy, Mic. 7.18. And this brings us to the

### IV. OBSERVATION.

That God's Mercies and Compassions fail not.

To this purpose is that the Lord saith Isa. 54. 7.8. For a small moment have I for saken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee: In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord. And indeed the Mercies of God to his Elect are, as himfelf is. eternall. As they arise from himself; so are they of interminable duration, as himself is. His Electing Mercy was before the World was; his Redeeming Mercy, before we were; his Calling and quickening Mercy, when we were dead in Sins and Trespasses; his Pardoning Mercy, when we have gone aftray; his Confirming Mercy, when we are ready to flip; his Comforting Mercy, when we are ready to despair; his Raising Mercy, when we shall be returned to the Earth; his Saving and advancing Mercy, when we shall stand in Judgment, and have no other Plea for our felves but his free Mercy, when Time shall be no more.

His Mercy therefore is indeficient, because it helps us when we are in the lowest Condition. We count

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him a fure Friend, who fails us not when we are at the lowest ebbe, in the greatest Streights, in the extremest Necessity. And thus doth God, who remembred us in our low estate; for his Mercy endureth for ever, Pfalm 136. 23. When our Pressure is great, so as that the Enemy hath inclosed us, and we know not which way to escape, (as Pharaoh did the Israelites at the Red sea,) even then he redeemeth us from our Enemies; for his Mercy endureth for ever, vers. 24. Even then when we have none to help, he helps us. When he feeth his . People's power gone, when there is none sout up or left. Deut. 32.36. when the Enemy is most insolent, the Danger greatest, our Hearts fail us, we despond and despair; when we say, Our way is hid from the Lord, and our Judgment passed over from our God; when we conclude that we are cast out of the fight of his eyes, and fay with our Saviour, My God, my God, why haft thou for saken me? when in our own account we are free among the dead, like the flain that lie in the Grave, whom we think he remembers no more, but they are cut off from his hand: yet even then his Compassions fail not. They neither fail in their Duration, nor in their Constancy, nor in their Efficacy, nor in their Seasonablenes: but when there is a Necessity, when it is for his People's greatest Advantage, they then appear effectually.

Yea sometimes, when we are insensible of our Danger; when we are disappointed of those Supports we relied on; when we are out of Hope; when perhaps we are secure, and know not how near our Affliction is; when the Judgment comes in a way that is not perceivable; as when the Arrow of God stieth by day, and the Pestilence walketh in darkness, and the Destruction wasteth at noon-day: In these and all other cases, wherein there is no Help nor Deliverance but in and from

from God, yea when there is no reason to expect any, no not from God himself, yet even then his Compassions fail not, he comes in opportunely, and shews Mercy efficaciously. And therefore justly, in the next place,

### V. OBSERVATION.

The Non-consumption of God's People, their Salvation, is ascribed by them to his indeficient Mercy onely, to his

Compassions that fail not.

David thus begins one of his Plalms, (89. 1, 2.) I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy Faithfulness to all generations. For I have faid, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy Faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens. And Pfal. 117. he faith, O praise the Lord, all ye Nations; praise him, all ye People : for his mercifull Kindness is great towards us, and the Truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord. And the 126. Pfal. throughout is one continued Invitation to give Thanks to God, for his Mercy endureth for ever, 26 times repeated. Confonant whereto is that of the Prophet Ifa. (63.7.) I will mention the Loving-kindnesses of the Lord. and the Praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord bath bestowed on us, and the great Goodness towards the bouse of Ifrael, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his Mercies, and according to the multitude of his Loving-kindnesses.

In the New Testament, the Blessed Virgin Mary in her Magnificat sings thus; My Soul doth magnify the Lord, for that his Mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He hath holpen his servant If rael, in remembrance of his Mercy, Luk. 1. 46, 50, 54. Zacharias, in his Benedistan, Blessed be the Lord God.

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of Israel, for be bath visited and redeemed his people; to perform the Mergy promised to our Fathers, vers. 68, 72. John Baptist was to give knowledge of Salvation unto his People, by the Remission of their Sins, through the

tender Mercy of our God, vers. 77, 78.

In a word, this was the main in the holy Songs of the Ministers of the Temple, to give thanks to the Lord, because his Mercy endureth for ever, I Chron. 16. 41. And in like manner Jehosaphat, when he had consulted with the people, appointed Singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the Beauty of Holiness, as they went out before the Anmy, and to Say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy

endureth for ever, 2 Chron, 20. 21.

And the same Commemoration of God's Mercy is the practice and delight of them that have a Spirit of Holiness in all Generations They write [ Ex dono Dei ] on all they have : they ascribe all they doe to Mercy : all their Prosperity, Victory, Success, they account as Mercies from God. When they cast up the Inventory of their Good things they have enjoyed, all that they posses, the Summe totall is, innumerable Mercies. How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God? how great is the Summe of them ? If I should count them, they are more in number then the Sand, Pfalm 129. 17, 18,

The Law of Gratitude (then which none is more equal) ties every one to magnify God's Mercy. What bath any which he hath not received? I Cor. 4. 7. And who can look upon his Receipts as due Wages, and not rather pure Alms? Who hath not received loads of Benefits from God, and all out of pure Mercy? Our Forming in the womb is a prime Mercy, our Birth, our Education, our Infruction, our Prefervation, our Salvation. That I be not infinite in this Account, Our Life, Breath, and all our Ways, all our natural Parts

and Abilities, all our Motions and Proceedings, all our Escapes from Dangers, from Sicknesses, from Death, and most of all from being a Prey to the Devil, and our Deliverance from Hell, are Evidences of transcendent Mercy in God, which all God's people are sensible of. And this leads us to the

### VI. OBSERVATION.

That the apprehension of God's great Mercy encourageth his People to hope and wait on God for a Consumma-

tion of their Welfare.

The greatness of God's Mercies encouraged David to cast himself into God's band, rather then to fall into the hands of men, 2 Sam. 24. 14. And Holy Daniel, in that effectual fervent Prayer, Dan. 9. 8, 9. to appeal to God's Mercy & O Lord, to us belongeth Confission of face, to our Kings, to our Princes, and to our Fathers, because we have sinned against thee : To the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. Vers. 18. We do not present our Supplications before thee for our Righteonsnesses, but for thy great Mercies. Pfalm 138. 8. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy Mercy, O Lord, endireth for ever : forfake not the works of thine own hands. Ifa. 63. 15. Look down from Heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy Holiness, and of thy Glory: where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, the founding of thy Bowells and of thy Mercies towards me? are they restrained? Pfal. 130. 7. Let Ifrael hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemotion.

Not one of all the Holy Saints in all the Bible hath ever dated to utter such Expressions to God or men, as if they could challenge the least Relief in Trouble,

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the least Abatement of Sufferings, much less eternall Life and Reward in Heaven, upon account of their own Merit, as Pharisaicall Self-Justitiaries have presumed to doe. Holy Jacob, on the contrary, (Gen. 32. 10.) tells God, I am not worthy of the least of all thy Mercies, and of all the Truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant. And Nehemiah, when he allegeth his Actings for God, Neh. 13. 22. thus bespeaks him; Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare

me according to the greatness of thy Mercy.

This is the Plea of all upright humble Souls; this is the Anchora sacra, the sure Anchour upon which their Spirits are stayed in all their Fluctuations; this is that Gale of wind which carries them on comfortably in all their Voiages. They have learned from the Palmift. Psal. 33. 18. Behold, the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and that hope in his Mercy: and therefore they fay, vers. 22. Let thy Mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee. They have found this Address to God always prosperous; and therefore they joyn with the Holy Prophet, in the words of my Text, and the two following verses, It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, because bis Compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy Faithfulness. The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul; therefore will I hope in him.

### APPLICATION.

And now what is more necessary, more just, more meet for us to doe, then to joyn in consort with the Holy Prophet in this passage? Surely we may each of us say, that it bath been of the Lord's Merches that we have not been consumed in this most deadly Pestilence, which hath swept away in our great City and the neighbou-

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ring places not many short of an Hundred thousand, and yet we have hitherto been preserved alive, to be Monuments of his Mercy. Have not his Mercies been new to us every morning, when we have heard either the dolefull Knells, or the hideous voice of Carr-men, (Bring out your Dead,) or the Reports of the Weekly Bills of Mortality, so many Hundreds in such a Parish fo many Thousands in the whole, dead of the Plague, and yet we alive?)\_

It was thought by God no small Mercy to Baruch, when the common Calamity added Grief to his Sorrow, when be fainted in his Sighing, and found no Rest, to give him his Life. Behold, I will bring Evill upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy Life will I give unto thee for a Prey in all places whither thou goeft, Jer. 45. 5.

And should you not count it a great Mercy to you, that in this common and fore Judgment, in which perhaps you have lost Wives, Husbands, Children, Friends, Neighbours, Goods, in which you have been filled with Fears, oppressed with Griefs, that yet you are not confumed; that yet the whole City, the whole Land is not confumed; that yet our King, our Nobles, our Teachers, our Government, our Glory is not buried in perpetual Oblivion?

It is true, it is a heavy Calamity; but we have deferved worse. It is true, we have lost our Friends; but our Lives are not loft, our Souls are not loft : unless our Unthankfulness, our future Disobedience, our Murmuring, provoke God to bring a worse Misery, the casting of Soul and body into Hell-sire; which our Sins have merited.

Oh then, let us still all our impatient Complaints; let us quiet our Spirits in the present estate we are in; let us be thankfull to God that we are not in Hell; let us confess our Unworthiness; let us be humbled

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for the great Depravedness of our former sinfull ways; let us justify God in his inflicting Vengeance on us, and our Land; let us forsake those Sins which we have been guilty of, that (we have reason to conceive) added fewell to this Fire that hath burnt so fiercely, and

wasted so extremely.

Let every one of us bewail the Plague of his own Heart: let us lay to heart and mourn for the Sins of the City and the whole Nation; their Pride, Uncleanness, Riot, Oppression, Unrighteousness, Profaneness, and the iterated Rebellions, first open and hostile, secondly more secret, in Non-Conformity to Laws and Government; and this maintained even against the unparallel'd Goodness and Mercy of a most Gracious Prince. All these, and what-ever Sins we have committed, let us, for time to come, sear to commit again, either the

fame, or the like Sins.

Let us dread God's Indignation, which we have found so intolerable: let us hope in his Mercy, which we have found so helpfull. Let us love God, who hath done us good so freely: let us be studious to please him, who hath remembred us in our low estate. And as we have our Lives as it were reftored : fo let us dedicate our Lives to him, confecrate our Souls to him, present our Bodies a living Sacrifice to him in our reasonable Service, and devote our selves whosly to serve him without fear in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the daies of our life. Considering seriously, that though we have now escaped this Judgment, yet without found Repentance, and thorough Amendment of life, though we have avoided this first Death hitherto, yet shall we not escape the second: though, with the Sodomites, we be delivered from the Sword , yet Fife from Heaven will confume us, we are referved to the Vengeance of eternall Fire.

Sermon XIV. The Divine Compassions.

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But if the Mercy of God lead us to Repentance, make us more obedient, more cleaving to God in Dependence on him; this Deliverance will be a Mercy indeed, a Pledge of more Mercies, yea an eternall Mercy: So that we shall have cause to joyn with all the Holy Saints in that Temple-Song, O give thanks unto the God of Heaven; for his Mercy endureth for ever. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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# DAVID's

# Thankfull Commemoration.

Part 1.

## The Fifteenth SERMON.

PSAL. Ivi. 13.

For thou hast delivered my Soul from Death: wilt thou not deliver my Feet from Falling, that I may walk before God in the Light of the living?

HE Title of this Psalm tells us the Occasion, to wit, David's Apprehension by the Philistines in Gath: And that points us to one of the two Times in which he was fain to make his Escape out of the Land of Israel to the King of Gath's Court, to avoid Saul's Persecution. Most likely it was the former of the two, when he was alone: for the second time he was accompanied with 600 men, I Sam. 27. 2. and not so liable to be taken, as now. And therefore it is more likely it was upon his Danger I Sam. 21. when, being warned by Jonathan of his Father's evil Intendments towards him, he got Provision from Ahimeleeh, and Goliah's Sword, and sled to Achish King of Gath: where hearing what the King's Servants said of him,

he was afraid, and changed his behaviour; and now, like a frantick person in shew, but an inspired person in truth, he indites this Psalm, expressing therein his Supplication for Deliverance, his Considence in God, his Enemies Practices, his assurance of their Disappointment, his Vows to God, his acknowledgment of God's Preservation, with his suture Hopes, and the End of all, in the words read to you, For thou hast delivered my Soul from death: wilt thou not deliver, &c?

In which words we have,

1. A Commemoration of what God had done for

him; Thou hast delivered my Soul from death.

2. A Postulation, expressing his Hope of what God would yet doe farther for him; Wilt thou not deliver my Feet from falling?

3. The End defigned in both; That I may walk be-

fore God in the light of the living.

Of these in their orders and

I. His Commemoration; which is of a Deliverance, and that from Death, and that of Himself, and that by God.

All Deliverances are memorable things. As the E-vil escaped is grievous; so the Evation is joyous. Whence it is, that men love to tell of their Preservations from Dangers, and to keep Memorials of them, and express their Gratitude towards the Means whereby they avoid them.

Navita securus narrare pericula gandet.

The Mariner, preserved from Shipwreck, loves to tell of his Dangers: the Souldier, that is safe after Fight, to talk of his Encounters. And the greater the Danger hath been, the more freely do they discourse of it: especially if the Deliverance be compleat. For then there are likely Festivities, to make others partakers of their Joy; Monuments or Records, to prevent Oblivi-

on; and (if they have any fenfe of God's Handson fmack of Religion,) Vows and Offerings are and performed to God. Thus did the affrighted Maraners; when, upon Jonah's being thrown over-board the Sea ceased from her raging, they seared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a Sacrifice unto the Lord, and

made Vows, Jonah 1. 15, 16.

And this was David's practice here and elsewhere. He had fled from one Enemy, but was fallen into the hands of more: He was as if a man did fly from a Lion, and a Bear met bim; or went into the bouse, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a Serpent bit him. Saul hated him out of fear, left he should supplant him: the Philistines, who had found him a terrible Enemy, could not but hate him, because he had been the instrument of destroying them. In this great Streight, his onely Refuge is in his God: In God have I put my truft, faith he, verf. II. I will not be afraid what Man can doe unto me. And being affured of his Preservation, he adds, Thy Vows are upon me, O God; I will ren-der Praises unto thee, vers. 12. The reason of which is in my Text, For thou haft delivered my Soul from death. Whence you may perceive this Conclusion to flow naturally,

#### OBSERVATION.

That God's Deliverance of our Souls or Lives from death, should engage us to perform our Vosos made to God in our Danger, and to render Praises to him for our Deliverance.

This was David's practice in all his Dangers, to make Supplication to God in the time of his Distres; to make Vows to God for the enforcing of his Prayers; and then to perform his Vows, and praise his Deliverer, when he was escaped.

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The 116. Pfalm is very full to this purpose. There he tells us of his Danger, vers. 3. The Sorrows of Death compassed me, and the Pains of Hell gat hold upon me. In this Extremity he applies himself to his facred Anchour, Then called I upon the Name of the Lord; O Lord, I befeech thee, deliver my Soul, vers. 4. The Event is, he was brought low, and God helped him, vers. 6. he called upon the Lord, and he heard him. Therefore he bespeaks his Soul, Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, vers. 7. Therefore he loves the Lord, consults what he may render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards him, chiefly for delivering his Soul from death: and he resolves to take the Cup of Salvation, and to call upon the Name of the Lord; to pay his Vows in the presence of all his people, vers. 12. 14. to offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, vers. 17. to tell of all God's works with gladness, and to make others to be partakers of his Joy. He invites the Godly to hear the Narrative of God's Mercies towards him. Pfal. 66. 16. Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul. And in a word. He uses all the ways he can, to demonstrate his fense of God's Goodness to him, to keep a Memorial of his Loving-kindnesses, to affect others with his Experiments; that both he and all others (as much as in him lay) might be moved to pray unto, to trust in, to praise and obey God, as one that delivereth from death.

The like Instance we have Isa. 38. concerning Hezekiah. A Message was brought to him, that he should die: He betakes himself to Prayer, turns his face towards the Wall, and weeps: God hears his Prayer, sees his Tears, adds to his days sisteen years: Being recovered, he writes an Hymn of Praise, sets out his Danger and Deliverance, with his Resolution to praise God all his days in the most solemn manner he was able.

Even

Even the Light of Nature taught the same to the Mariners, Jonah 1. 16. All people whatfoever, that have acknowledged a God, have still ascribed their Deliverances from Death to their God, and have still performed their Eurap 15/10 10, or Thank-offerings, to their Deities upon their Preservation. Nor was this done by

them without great and just Reasons.

1. For first, Death is the chief of all Evils: it deprives of all Good. Omnia appetunt Bonum, saith the Philosopher in the beginning of his Ethicks; It's natural to all to defire their own Good. Beafts will struggle much with the Slayer, before they will die. for skin, and all that a man hath will be give for his Life. The most fickly, needy person, would fain preserve his Life. Death is most resisted, as the most terrible. Na-

ture apprehends it as the Privation of all Good.

Even our Lord Christ would fain have had this Cup pass from him, and therefore in the days of his Flesh, he offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to fave him from Death, Heb. 5. 7. Though he had no Sin of his own to gall his Conscience, yet he had a natural sense of the Evil of Death, and earnestly defired Deliverance from it. The Being he had as a Man he fo prized, that if his Father's Will had not engaged him to it, he would never have parted with it.

Life is sweet; it is a pleasant thing to behold the Sun: but there is Bitterness in Death, as the King of the Amalekites speaks, I Sam. 15. 32. Many Circumstances make it indeed more bitter to some then others: yet to all it hath its exceeding Bitterness. O Death, (saith the Son of Sirach) how bitter is the Remembrance of thee to the man that liveth at rest in his posselsions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath Prosperity in all things, yea unto him that is yet able to receive meat! Ecclus.41.1. I deI deny not but some, to avoid the sury of Tyrants, have killed themselves; yet not without fretting and indignation. Some to gain an immortal Name, and others by Satanical Delusions or Philosophical Charms, have of themselves embraced Death: but I cannot say they have done it without any Reluctancy at all; though to avoid a worse Evil, or obtain a better Good, (as they conceived,) they have parted with their Lives.

There were some Circumstances which might have made Death more bitter at this time to David, then it was to him when he fell asleep, and was gathered to his Fathers. To be killed in the Land of the Philistines, by the hands of the Uncircumcifed, when he fled from Saul out of some distrust of God's Preservation in his own Country; to have died with the Disappointment of his hopes of being King of Israel, to which he was anointed by Samuel, and had God's Promise for it; had been a greater Grievance, then to die in his Bed, full of days, and in a good old age.

Violent Deaths and dying by pestilential Diseases are the more terrible, in regard a person is then deprived of all Help, Society, Conserence with others; all shun him (even his nearest Relations) as an instrument of Death, when dying, he kills others with his Breath; his Plague-sore takes away the Life of his Child, whose Life he prizeth above his own; the Life of his Friend, yea his Wise, that is as his own Soul. These and many other such Concomitants of Death do make it more

dreadfull to a man.

But there is yet something besides that makes it most terrible. The Consideration that Death is the Wages of Sin adds greater weight to the pressure of Death: for then Death becomes not onely the Burthen of the Body, but also of the Spirit. While the Back is whole, it will

will bear much: but when the Skin is flayed off, or the Shoulder-blade broken, then to have a Load laid on the Back, is intolerable. So it is in the case of Death: When there is Peace of Conscience, it is not so heavy news, but that Faith and a good Conscience can bear the tidings of it: but when Death is presented as the Fruit not onely of the first Sin of Man, but also of our own particular Sins, so as Conscience tells a man, My Excess in Drinking bath shortened my Life, I have hastened my Death by my Riot and Intemperance, by my Quarrelling, my Disloyalty, my Eagerness to get Wealth, by my Wilfulness and Rashness in venturing into infected houses, by a pragmatick humour in meddling with that which did not concern me, by these and such like practices; Oh then how doth Death bite as a Serpent, and sting as an Adder! The Sting of Death is Sin, when it lies on the Conscience: it kills as a Scorpion; tortures as well as kills; makes a Fire in the bones; kindles Hell-fire in the Soul.

Especially when the Soul remembers how Sin hath been committed presumptuously with an high hand, against Instructions of Parents, Warnings of Friends, Admonitions of Preachers, Offers of Grace, Invitations to Repentance: that all these have been slighted, and even the Gospel of Christ hath been neglected: that the Sin remains unpardoned: that after the first Death the second Death is expected, after Death Judgment follows, which ushers in Wrath and Vengeance.

When the Conscience of Unmercifulness, Neglect of the poor Members of Christ, wasting our Estate in Luxury, spending our precious Time in vanities, (which should have been employed in Prayer, and other holy Exercises and Meditations, and in Self-examination,) slies in our Faces, frights us like the fight of Furies; when the thought of Christ's Coming to Judgment, of

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that dreadfull Sentence, Goe, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill and his Angels, still runs in

our mind; then is Death the King of Terrours.

The man not onely sings Adrian's Ditty, Animula, vagula, blandula, Hospes Comésque Corporis, Que nunc abibis in loca? but he roars out for the Disquietness of his Soulz and cries out with Cain, My Punishment, or Iniquity, is greater then I can bear. Then will he wish the Mountains and Rocks to fall on him, and hide him from the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his Wrath is come, and who is able to stand? Rev. 6. 16, 17.

Now then Deliverance from Death must needs deferve Praise and Thanksgiving: Deliverance from the greatest Evil should be received with the greatest Gratitude. Deliverance from natural Death causeth Holy persons to bless God: but Deliverance from Sin, (the cause of Death,) from the Wrath to come, (eternal Death,) much more. This makes the Deliverance most compleat, and the Thanksulness should be most ample.

To which is to be added,

2. That the Deliverance is by God: it is He that delivers the Soul from Death. Now what comes from God's hand is most acceptable to them that love God. A Deliverance from Death by a man doth ingage our Affections to him: we think our selves obliged to him while we live, who hath preserved our Life; especially if he be a person of great Quality. To have our Lives saved by the King whom we had provoked, to be pardoned our Treason, exceedingly heightens our valuation of the Benefit.

There is much more cause to magnisse the Goodness of God, who saves his people from Death by pardoning of their Sins, by advancing them to Nearness with himself; who so saves from Death temporal, as to give

Life

Life eternal. Behold, faith Hezekiah, (1fa. 38. 17.) for Peace, I had great Bitterness: but thou hast in love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit; for thou hast cast all my Sins behind thy back. The Forgiveness of Sins (which occasioned Death) is a greater Benefit then the prolonging of Life: And then it is Happiness accumulated to the height, when there is not onely length of days on Earth, but eternal Life in Heaven conferred upon the faved.

Bless the Lord, O my Soul, saith David, (Psal. 103. 1, 2, 3, 4.) and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: Who forgiveth all thy Sins; and healeth all thy Diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth

thee with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies.

All which Mercies are the more joyfull to the believing Soul, because they are not so much the fruit of our Prayers, as of God's free Grace in Christ. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ so loved the World, the finfull World, even when they were Enemies to him, that he gave his onely-begotten Son to death, even the death of the Cross, that who soever believeth on him should

not perish, but have everlasting Life.

This Deliverance from Death proceeding from God's special Love, that great Love wherewith he loved us. when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins, quickening us together with Christ, saving us by Grace, is that which makes it incomprehenfibly welcome, and encourageth the Soul to expect farther Preservation; as David doth here: which brings me to the Second Part of my Text, now to be handled, viz.

II. David's Postulation; Wilt thou not deliver my

Feet from falling?

The Expression seems to be expostulatory, but is to be conceived to include a Petition. He demands of God, Wilt thou not, &c? not as one that challenged it as his due desert, but as assured of the Continuance of God's Goodness. He deprehends in God a Fountain of Love, which is still running over, slowing down in far-

ther Streams of faving Mercy.

We have an exact and ample Paraphrase upon the words of my Text in that passage, Psal. 36. from vers. 5. to the end, where, having set out the Wickedness of men, and his own Danger, he breaks forth in extolling God's Goodness, in an assurance of a constant Current of Mercies; and then is instant with God for the Continuance of his Preservation.

This part of my Text is a most precious passage, of great Use for your Meditation in times of Danger by reason of Pestilence or War; and it shews this to be the customary practice of Holy persons, to gather Arguments of Affurance of future Help from God, from their experience of his former gracious Deliverances. So did David: I Sam. 17.37. when he was to fight with Goliab, he argued thus, The Lord that delivered me out of the Paw of the Lion and of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And after him S. Paul, 2 Cor. 1.9, 10. We had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God that raiseth the dead; Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we truft, that be will yet deliver. In his former Deliverance he perceived the Power of God, that he could deliver from Death: he deprehends his watchfulness over him, in the Continuance of his Deliverance, his Love to him and Care of him: which confirms him in the expectation of farther Help for the future.

As they fay all Vertues are concatenate in Prudence: fo all Mercies are linked together in God's Love and Care of his Servants. And indeed so the Apostle in-

ferrs,

ferrs, Rom. 8. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall be not with him also freely give us all things? He that preserves our Lives, will keep our Feet. Thou hast delivered my Soul from Death: wilt thou not also deliver my Feet from falling?

Surely thou wilt.

But then this Deliverance must be fought for at his hands; which is also implied in this Expression. When Christ cured the lame Cripple, he bade him take up his bed, and walk. God, when he faves our Life from death, expects that we should walk before him. Our Life is a Pilgrimage; we walk from one Stage of it to another: as the Sun runs its course, so doth Man. The Emanations of our Minds, the Actions of our Members, are our Steps. If we walk not uprightly, if we heed not what we think, what we speak, what we act, our Feet will quickly fall, first into Sin, and then into Mischief. The Pfalmist, Pfal. 73. 2. tells us out of his experience of himself, that his Feet were almost gone, his Steps had well-nigh flipt. He had stumbled at the Stumbling-stone, to wit, the Prosperity of the Wicked: This begat Envy in him; and that drew him on to a kind of Affection to their ways, to a condemning of his own Course, and offending against the generation of God's Children. And had not God mercifully caught him when he was falling, by directing him to the Sanctuary of God, where he might see the End of the wicked, (that however they stood on smooth, yet they were but slippery places; they walked on Ice, which would fuddenly break under them, and then they would fink for ever,) he had certainly perished. Therefore he recovers himself, and applies himself to God, vers.23, 24. and stays himself on the Manutenentia Divina; Thou hast bolden me by my right hand: Thou wilt guide me with thy Counsel, and after receive me to Glory. Gg 2

As for me, (faith he in another Pfalm, 41. 12.) thou upholdest me in mine Integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever. Faith in God's fustaining Grace is the onely fure Preservative against falling into Sin, and thereby into Misery. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee, faith the Prophet Isa. (26.3.) He that trusteth in his own Heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered, faith Solomon, Prov. 28. 26. He that leaneth on his own Free will, his own good Purpofes, his own Reason, his own good Merits, shall be sure to fall. S. Peter, when he was confident of his own Strength, that he should die rather then deny his Master, (and was fo venturous thereupon as to go into the High Priest's Palace, ) was so affrighted with the words of a-Maid, that he not onely denied him, but forfwore him.

Israel, which followed after the Law of Righteousness, attained not to the Law of Righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law: for they stumbled at the Stumbling-

stone, faith the Apostle, Rom. 9. 31, 32.

We are like little Children, we love to be on our Feet, not knowing our own Weakness: and then we venture without God to guide and stay us, and so we fall and wound our selves. Our safest way is to distrust our selves, to work out our Salvation with sear and trembling; as knowing that it is God that worketh in us to will and to doe, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2.12, 13. And accordingly to betake our selves to him, as David did here, that he may keep our Feet from falling; having the same designed End that he had, that we may malk before him in the light of the living. Which leads me to the Third Part of my Text, David's Aim in his Commemoration and Postulation: but time will not now permit the handling of it. Onely an Applicati-

on of what hath been already spoken remains to be added.

### APPLICATION.

What you have heard David did, it concerns you to doe. You that are here now alive may fay, God hath delivered your Souls from Death. I wish I might say truly, that God hath delivered your Souls from the Death of Sin; that God hath given you Repentance unto Life; that you were none of you such as should die in your Sins, but by believing in Christ should see the light of Life. I wish that he were to you the Resurrection and the Life: so that though you were dead, yet you might live; that living and believing in him, you might never die, as our Saviour said to Martha, Joh. 11. 25, 26. I hope the best of you. However, while you are yet alive, (especially you that have been in danger by reason of the Contagion of late, ) endeavour to walk in the steps of David. Remember what your Prayers were in your Perils; what Vows and Promises you made, when you expected Death; what Perplexity and Anxiety seized on you, when the Remembrance of your Sins filled you with Horrour; when you looked for Death to attack you, and cast your Body into the Grave, and perhaps your Soul into Hell; when you expected a Summons to the Bar of God's Judgment, there to be tried, and to have your Doom passed on you. Call to mind (I beseech you) what secret Meditations, what Purposes you had; what pass'd between God and your Souls in those Streights you were in. And then resolve, as David did here, to address your selves to God, as he did, saying, Thy Vows are upon me, O God; I will render Praises unto thee, for thou hast delivered my Soul from Death.

Gg 3

O re-

O remember what God hath done for you, in giving you your Lives, in bringing you back from the depth of the Earth again. When thousands have fallen on your right hand and on your left hand, yet the Evil hath not come nigh you. If it have entred into your Houses, lighted on your Persons; yet it hath not taken away your Breath: so that though the Lord hath chastened you

fore, yet be bath not given you over unto Death.

Chiefly, if God have awakened you that flept, that you might stand up from the dead, and Christ might give you light; O then rejoyce in God's Goodness to you: let the Remembrance of it make the Thoughts of God delightfull to you; quicken you to run the ways of his Commandments; mind you to perform the great Duties of Reformation of your Lives, and new Obedience to God that preserved you, according to all the Vows, Resolutions and Engagements which were upon you when you were in Trouble.

Yea, if you were then infensible of your Condition, and thought not on the accursed estate which would have befallen you if you had died in your Sins; now at least begin to lay it to heart. Sure, though you have escaped out of the hands of Death now, yet it will overtake you at last: All the means you can use, all the Advantages, all the Privileges you have, cannot avoid it, or exempt you from going the way of all slesh.

Oh then that you would now become in your Lifetime, what you would willingly be found to be at the hour of Death. If you would not be found of Death Swearing, Lying, Deceiving, or engaged in any ungodly and unrighteous way; then be not so now. If you would then be found Praying, Meditating on God's Word, Praising God; inure your selves to such Exercises now. It will not be easie to doe it then, if you be not accustomed to it now. You will then have the Comfort of a happy Death, if you be acquainted

with the practice of a holy Life now.

If your Remembrance of God's Goodness towards you puts you on such Resolutions, the Remembrance that you have tasted how gracious the Lord is, how he hath redeemed your Souls from the nethermost Hell, by the Bloud of his Son, (which you are to remember with the greatest Thankfulness, when you come to receive the Holy Communion,) and preserves you from the second Death; you will then be animated to expect of God, that he will keep your Feet from falling.

Take heed that you stumble not at the Prosperity of the wicked, so as to approve and chuse their ways. Take heed that Christ be not a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offence to you; that you stumble not at the Word, disbelieving the Gospel, being disbedient to the Precepts of the Word: lest ye be appointed unto Wrath, and not to obtain Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Take heed of ordering your Steps by your own Reason, by the imagined Light within you; which is for the most part an Ignis fatuus, a dangerous Meteor, that will bring you into Pits and Bogs. Take heed of trusting to your own Free will, your own good Purposes: they will prove but a broken Reason which, when you lean on them, will run into your hand, and pierce them.

Get your Feet shod with the Shoes of the Preparation, or (as it may be well read) the Pavement, of the Gospel of Peace, as firm ground upon which you may stand; not

your own Good works, or your own Merits.

As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving: as the Apostle exhauteth, Colos. 2. 6, 7. Still pray that God would keep your Feet from falling;

and order your Steps in his Word, that no Iniquity get dominion over you. And then you may with assurance say, I shall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the Lord: and you shall obtain David's desire, to malk be-

fore God in the light of the living.

But sure we walk contrary to God in the Darkness of this World; else why is it that God hath called to contend against us by Fire? It was not long agoe, that we rejoyced because we had prevailed upon the Waters; and now the Scene is altered, and we mourn because the Fire hath prevailed upon our houses at Land. Sure we rejoyced not with trembling; we were sensible of God's Hand on others, but not sensible we deser-

ved his Indignation on our felves.

God warned us by Signs in the Heavens, but we amended not; he sent the Pestilence, but we reformed not; we were embroiled in War, but nothing bettered; Preachers cried out against our Sins, but we cried not to God for Pardon; the Lord's voice cried to the City, but we were not men of wisedom, to see his Name. Our Sins cried to Heaven for Vengeance, and the Lord's Vengeance hath from Heaven fallen upon us. We observed days of Fasting formally, but did not really repent in Dust and Asses; and now God hath really reduced our Great City unto Dust, and turned it into Asses.

Hath not God by his Judgment, resembling that of Sodom, pointed out the Sins which procured this Judgment, Pride, Fulness of bread, abundance of Idleness; not strengthening the hands of the poor and needy; Wantonness and Unrighteousness? Were not the Souls of many (as Lot's in Sodom) vexed from day to day in hearing and seeing mens unrighteous deeds and wicked conversation; perhaps having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it?

But

But are we better then they? Are we not all under Sin, liable to the same Condemnation? We may, we ought to bemoan the Calamity which is come on others. The lifting up of God's Hand should affright us, the Blow of his Hand on our Brethren should afflict us. We, out of Sympathy with them, out of Dread of God's Anger, should bewail the Burning which the Lord hath kindled.

Jeremiah's Lamentations are sutable to this Occasion. We may take up those Wailings, Alas! Alas! our great Neighbour-City is burnt, in a short time is her Judg-

ment come.

But that which most befits us, which is most likely to benefit us and them, is, to be affected with God's Visitation; to look upon this as a Forerunner of a greater Fire, magnum futuri Judicii Præindicium, an Example of the Vengeance of eternal Fire. Let us be awakened by it out of our Security, as considering that we have the like Sins, and may expect the like Punishment; that God's Burning there is our Warning here; that however it were in respect of men, yet in respect of God it is as a Beacon fired to alarm us, that we may prepare to meet our God by Fasting and Prayer, and Amendment of life, lest, if we repent not, we likewise perish. It becomes us not to be Censurers of others, but to judge our selves, that we be not judged: we must not infult over them, but pity them. If we have our Houfes spared, it is that we may receive them that are deftitute: if our Goods be preserved, it is that their Wants may be supplied.

In a word, we should take heed of Edom's Sin, who rejoyced in the day of Jerusalem's Calamity: take heed of promising to our selves increase of Trade, or other worldly Advantages: most of all, take heed of Flattering our selves, as if we were better, more safe, more

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234 David's thankfull, &c. Sermon XV.

in God's Favour then they. Let us rather fear God's Judgments, tremble at his Word, fearch our own ways, turn unto the Lord with our whole Souls, pray for them that have fuffered, help them what we can; that their Breach may be repaired, our Tranquillity may be lengthened, and our Souls delivered from the Wrath to come. Which the Lord vouchfafe for his Son's fake. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

DAVID's

## DAVID's

## PIOUS RESOLUTION.

Part II.

## The Sixteenth SERMON.

P s A L. lvi. 13.

That I may walk before God in the light of the living.

S God is the Alpha, the Beginning of all things; fo he is the Omega or End of all things: as he is the Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometo; fo should he be the Scope of our Lives, as he was here of David's: according to the last Particular observed in this Text of Scripture, viz.

III. The Aim and End of David in his Commemoration and Postulation; That I may walk before thee in

the light of the living.

To this End he both commemorates what God had already done for him, in delivering his Soul from Death; and peritions, with expectation of speeding, that he would yet doe more for him, in keeping his Feet from falling. He doth not desire this Stability of his Feet, that he might sit still, or sluggistly keep his Bed, or lie on his Couch; but that he might walk.

Hha Walking

By this Metaphor of Walking the Scripture understands the Motions of the Mind and Actings of the Members, as they are subject to a Rule; which is the Way in which a person walks. If it be right, it is God's Law: if it be wrong, it is the Devices of mens own Minds, the way of a man's own Heart, or the Course of the World, or the Wiles of Satan; which are mentioned as the crooked ways men walk in, Eph. 2. 2, 3. All these are ways of Darkness, wherein men depart from God, and walk after Satan. But David's Aim is,

to malk before God in the light of the living:

Walking before God here denotes not onely a doing or thinking fo, as that the Action or Thought would still be in God's presence; as if David meant no more then this, that God would see him, or his Walk would be in his fight, whether he would or no: But it means also such a Walking before God, as to eye his presence. what-ever he should doe or think, with an aim to please him. And therefore walking before God is rendred often, pleasing God: as when it is said, Gen. 5.24. Enoch walked with God, in the Greek it is, Enoch pleased God; which the Authour to the Hebrews follows, Heb. 11.5. Enach before his Translation had this Testimony, that he pleased God. And so it notes not onely his apprehenfion of God's entitative Presence, or his Tuition or beholding him, but also his pleasing God in his Converfation, having a regard to his Approbation, out of defire to obtain his Favour, as well as to his Power, to avoid his Anger. As S. Paul faith of himfelf, 2 Cor.2.17

We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God; but as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the light of God Speak we in Christ: and Chap. 4. 2. commending our selves to every man's Conscience in the light of God.

There is somewhat more also, I think, in this Expression, viz. That his Aim was to walk before God by worshipping at the Tabernacle; for that place he means sometimes when he speaks of appearing before God: as Pfal. 42.2. When shall I come, and appear before God? the meaning of which longing is thus expressed Psal. 43. 3. O send out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead me and bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacle: and Pfal. 84. 2. My Soul longeth, year even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord: my Heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. And so it hath the same sense with that of Hezekiah, Isa. 38. 20. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my Songs to the stringed Instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord. And then, in the light of the living, is all one with, all the time of his Life, or among the living; opposite to that which Hezekiah said vers. 18, 19. The Grave cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the Pit cannot hope for thy truth. The Living, the Living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. And to this sense is it which the Psalmist here faith, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. So that hence ariseth this

### OBSERVATION

That a Godly man, when God delivers his Soul from Death, and his Feet from falling, aims at walking before God in the light of the living; as counting himself thereto engaged.

Hh 3

Indeed every Holy Christian counts his Life due to God. Rom. 14. 7, 8. None of we (faith the Apostle) liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Every one that hath found God gracious to him, doeth as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the Saints of old did, he walks before God, as counting his Life onely Vitam vitalem, a Life indeed, while he imploys it for God: otherwise, while he lives without God in the world, he counts himself to live a liveless Life, to be dead while he lives.

Now walking before God may be understood either Materially, and so all men walk before God: (his Eye is upon them; he knows their down-sitting and their uprising; he understandeth their Thoughts afar off; he compasseth their path and their lying down, and is acquainted with all their ways. There is not a word in their Tongue but he knows it altogether, as it is Pfal. 139. 2, 3, 4) or Formally and reciprocally, so as that God is eyed by us; his Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotency, are apprehended and observed by us, as the Psalmist speaks, Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me: because

he is at my right hand. I shall not be moved.

This may be done either Speculatively, to as to contemplate his Being, to enquire after him, to have some Apprehensions of God: or Affectively, either so as to hate God, as the Devils and damned Spirits, that acknowledge God to be, but with trembling and horrour of Spirit, and against their wills, James 2. 19. or so as to love God; If any love God, the same is known of him: or Practically, so as not onely to acknowledge him to be God, and to love him, but also relatively to own him as our God; as the Psalmist, Psal. 48. 14. This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our Guide unto death.

This Walking before God comprehends the constant ordering the frame of our Actions for God. A man is not faid to walk, who makes but one Step: Walking imports a Continuation of Steps; and Walking before God, a Multiplication of Actions, and those in God's way; as they faid, Mic. 4. 2. He will teach us his ways, and we shall walk in his paths. For though all the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings: yet he counts no Walking to be before him, but that which is in Holiness and Righteonsness, as it is Luk. 1.75. There must be a removing from the opposite term, to wit, Satan. Some are already turned aside after Satan, saith the Apostle, I Tim.5.15. Those cannot walk before God, that hold Intelligence with Satan. When Eve held Parley with the old Serpent, the departed from God: and fo did Saul, when he went after the Witch of Endor.

And in like manner doe all that are conformed to this World, that are fashioned after their own Lusts, that adhere to their own Reason. Familiarity with Satan, Conformity to this World, Reasoning with sless and bloud, are inconsistent with walking before God. There must be a turning from Darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, as the words are Ad. 26. 18. God must be the Terminus ad quem, he to whom we come, as it is Heb. 11. 6. He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And this Walking is not, when we onely doe some Actions in God's way. A man is not said to walk before God, that sometimes is in God's way, and then skips out of it again: such Going in and out is not Walking, but running counter; like the way of a Serpent upon a Stone, dancing, leaping, and frisking. Then a man is said to walk to a place or person, not when

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he doth make a Vagarie or two, but keeps on in an uniform, settled, even pace, hath his eye upon the Mark, and follows after it wittingly, willingly, constantly; when he doth, as the Apostle speaks, Phil. 3.

16. go on gradually, orderly, by the same Rule that the Apostles and other Holy persons have heretofore gone by. A man cannot come to God per Saltum, by a Leap; but by a constant regular Course of actions, propounding to himself God as the Object unto whom he directs his Actions, and his Motive for what he doeth.

And herein there must be two things especally eyed

by us: to wit,

1. God's Sovereignty and Almightiness. I am the Almighty God, faith God to Abraham, Gen. 17. 1. walk before me, and be thou perfect. The Fear and Reverence of God as the Supreme Majesty, as he that is Maximus, the Greatest, should attract our Eyes and our Hearts towards him with Awfulness: as Subjects compose and order their Carriage with Awe and Respect to their Sovereign, because he is their Lord; attiring themselves sutable to his Dignity, so as not to difgrace him by their flovenly Habits. And thus the Apostle requires, that we should walk evenuovos, Rom. 13. 13. that is, in good fashion, decently or honestly, (as we would fay, and our Translation reads it,) after the Court-fashion of Heaven. We should walk before God in white, like the heavenly Courtiers, cloathed with white Linen, fine and clean, which is the Righteousness of Saints, Rev. 19.8. that is, with holy Habits and Difpositions of mind. They that walk before God must have clean Hands, and a pure Heart. He that hath not lift up his Soul to Vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, Pfal.24. 4. enters into God's holy Hill. As Kings love Purity of heart, and grace in the lips, Prov. 22. 11. fo doth God much more. He is of purer Eyes then to behold Evil, he

he cannot look on Iniquity with any good liking. Such as be foolish shall not stand in his sight; be hateth all workers of Iniquity: be will destroy them that speak leasing, &c. Psal. 5. 5, 6. No impure-spirited man that hath vain Imaginations of God, that fears him not, neither is God in all his Thoughts, can stand before him. If Solomon would not permit any fuch about him, neither furely will God. Rectitude of Heart is the chief Requisite, when we appear before him. Blessed are the pure in Heart, saith our Saviour, (Matth. 5. 8.) for they shall see God. As long as a man retains erroneous Opinions in the things of God, as long as vain Thoughts, fraudulent Designs, unrighteous Projects, evil Counfels, lodge in his Heart, and bear fway in his Actions, he cannot walk acceptably with God. As to Walking well bodily, the chief thing is the Locomotive faculty: so in Spiritual Walking before God, the main thing is, to be moved by a right Principle, a due Apprehension of God as he is Most high.

2. God must be set before us not onely as Maximus, but also as Optimus; not onely as the Greatest, but also as the Best; not onely as one that can punish us, but also as one that can and will reward us; as Best in himfelf, and good to all that feek him. He that shall apprehend it in vain to serve God, and that there is no profit in walking mournfully before the Lord of hoasts, that there is no profit in keeping his Ordinances, as those mentioned Mal. 3. 14. will never walk pleasantly before God. Such a Servant as looks upon God as a hard Master, that reaps where he doth not sow, and gathers where he did not strew, will shun God and his Service as much as may be; hide his Talent in a Napkin, rather then imploy it to improvement for his Master. He that walks before God must walk aneiging, exactly, as the Apostle speaks Epbes. 5. 15. eireumspectly and diligently.

diligently. As Courtiers that expect Benefits from their Prince, will be carefull to accommodate themselves to his Humour, diligent to profecute his Bufiness to the utmost of their skill and power: so is it with those that walk before God, they expect Preferment from him, and therefore are studious to answer his Expectation. And when they find God's Favour towards them, they prize it as their Life, Pfal. 30. 5. yea better then Life it felf. As the Prince's Favour refresheth a Servant that attends on him; is as the Dew upon the tender Herbs. which makes them fpring up fresh, and give a sweet Savour: so the Favour of God makes his Servants walk diligently before him, with all readiness and alacrity doing his Will. So faith David, Pfalm 26. 3. Thy Loving-kindness is before mine eyes; and I have walked in tby Truth.

And indeed this is the chief Encouragement to a man that walks before God, that he does all for a Prince that is not onely Delicia generis humani, the Love and Delight of mankind, (as Titus Vespasian the Roman Emperour was styled;) but that he serves a God who is Love it self, Joh. 4. 16. in whom there is not onely a River, but an Ocean of Love; not a Pond, but a Fountain of Love. All his ways are Love to his Holy ones. He loved them with an everlasting Love, and with

Louing-kindness hath drawn them to him.

This was it that made David to aim at malking before God, because he had found God's Love to him, in delivering his Sont from Death, and his Feet from falling. Thus God encouraged Abraham to walk before him, because he had assured him that he was his Shield and exceeding great Reward, Gen. 15. 1. It is good for me to draw nigh unto God, saith the Psalmist, Pfal. 73. 28.

But above all the Manifestations of God's Love, that which is the grand Motive to encourage our walking before before God, is, that there is now a new and living Way whereby we may draw nigh to God, even through the Veil of his Son's Flesh. That now the Enmity betwixt us and God, caused by Adam's Sin, and Satan's project to alienate Men from God, is taken away. That now there is on Earth Peace, and Good will towards men. That now the Son of God is made the Way, the Truth, and the Life, whereby we may come to the Father. That now we are affured, that, however it be that we travel through a Wilderness, through a dry and barren Land, where we meet with fiery Serpents and many Wants; yet we have Manna from Heaven to feed on, and we drink of the Rock, which Rock is Christ; Spiritual Meat, and Spiritual Drink. That as the Serpent was lifted up upon the Pole, so the Son of man was lifted up; that who seever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That now we have the Cloud by day to shade and guide us, and the Pillar of fire by night to direct us: we have not the Shadows of the Law, but the clear Light of the Gospel, to inlighten us with the Light of Heaven. That we have the Spirit from on high given us, to be a Spirit of Inlightning; a Spirit of Regeneration, to beget us again; a Spirit of Life, to quicken us, and make us new Creatures in Christ; a Spirit to comfort and refresh us; a Spirit to intercede for us. And that (which is the upshot of all) there is a Rest which remains for the people of God; not in an earthly Canaan, but in the Heavenly ferusalem, where we shall rest in Abraham's Bosom, in the prefence of the Holy Angels and glorified Saints; in the Arms of our Husband, who hath espoused us to himself by the greatest demonstration of Love, having purified us to himself by his Bloud, and joyned us to bimself by his own Spirit. That we shall behold the Face of our Father which is in Heaven, in whom is all Beauty. Ii a

Beauty, all Worth, and all Love: everlasting for shall be upon our heads, and Sorrow and Misery shall fly away: we shall be Kings and Priests unto God our Father, and that for ever. So that it will be abundant Recompence to us, that we have walked before God in the light of the living, if, although it be through many Tribulations, yet we at last enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now to the end we may walk before God,

1. It will be necessary, that we inquire into and obferve the Ways and Places wherein God walks, and where he delights to meet with us. The Church in Isa. 64. 5. thus speaks to God, Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh Righteousness, those that remember

thee in thy Ways.

There are indeed Ways of God that are unsearchable, and Paths past finding out. The ways of God's Election and Reprobation are secret things, belonging to the Lord our God, and cannot be found out by us, but onely à posteriori, by observing how he works in our own Hearts; and thus far onely we are to observe them, so as to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure; that by doing such things as may improve the Work of God's Spirit in our Hearts, we may never fall.

The Works of God's Providence in the World, and his Works of Creation, we are to inquire into, that we may admire and magnifie him that maketh all. But his Ways of Judgment we are to observe, and his Ways of Precept and Promise. We are to take notice of his Corrections, when we go aftray; of his Mercy and Truth, when we walk uprightly: how he meets us with a Rod in his hand, when we wander out of his Paths; with Embraces, with refreshing Provision, when we walk uprightly before him. This was Danid's

vid's practice, (as he tells us Pfal. 18. 21, 22, 23.) I have kept, saith he, the Ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his Judgments were before me, and I did not put away his Statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and kept my self from

mine Iniquity.

2. As we are to observe God's Ways, so we are to prepare our own Ways before him: (as it is faid of 70tham, 2 Chron. 27. 6.) As he that is to walk with another, must provide all things in readiness, that he may keep him company: so must be that would walk with God; he must awake, and stand up from the dead; (as the Apostle speaks, Eph. 5. 14.) awake to Righteonsness. I Cor. 15.34. He is not fit to walk with another. that is drowzy and loves to flumber: fo the person that will walk before God must be wakefull, listning to God's Call, ready when he shall send for him and require his attendance; he must be attentive to all the Motions of his Spirit; be prepared to go with God whithersoever he will have him. Thus it was with Abraham, Heb. 11.8. By Faith, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an Inheritance, he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. He that will walk before God, must not sit down in that place and state in which he is, and say with the Rich man, Luk. 12. 19. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; but must count himself, as Abraham did, a Pilgrim and Sojourner upon Earth: he must not take this Earth to be his resting-place, but go after Christ, bearing his reproach: he must learn to deny himself, and take up his Cross, and so follow him.

A Heart that thinks of nothing but how he may injoy the Good things of this Life, that is so minded as Peter was in the Mount, that thinks it is good to be here.

and cries, Let us build us Tabernacles below, is not fit to walk with God. He that will walk with God must follow him fully: (as it is said of Caleb, Num. 14. 24. that he had another Spirit then the rest of the Spies, and followed God fully.) What way God will have us to take, that we must take: where he will have us to be, there we must be contented to be: what estate his Providence shall allot to us, that we must embrace: what he will have us to doe, we must be willing to doe. We must not imagine that we are to walk before God as our Equall, our Fellow, but as our Lord and Master; and accordingly must be attentive to what he saith to us, and be ready to submit to his Pleasure.

3. To right Walking before God, it is necessary that we should get the Staff of Faith in our hand. It was that which enabled Abraham to walk with God, and Noah, and Enoch, and all the Saints. He that will walk before God, must not onely believe that God is, but also that be is near unto, and a Remarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6. He must apprehend God with him, while his Heart is towards God. For indeed, nothing will animate us to walk with God, but the affurance we have that God will be with us, while we be with him; that if we feek him, he will be found of us; if we for sake him, he will for sake us: as the Prophet told Asa, 2 Chron. 15. 2. As many as mean to walk with God must hold fast this Staff of Faith, to stay themselves in Precipices and slippery places, to remove what would cast them down, to support them when they grow feeble and faint, to clear themselves of all Incumbrances that may clog them in their going, to beat down all Assaults; in a word, to stay their Minds fo, as that by no Inveiglements or Difficulties they may be put out of their way.

4. He that will walk before the Lord must have

low thoughts of himfelf; as Abraham, Gen. 18. 27. I have begun to speak unto my Lord, who am but Dust and Ashes. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to doe justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Mic. 6. 8. It is an humble Heart onely that is fit for God's Company. As he is not fit to wait on a Prince, that , is of a fawey and malapert Disposition, that thinks as well of himself as of his Master, that will take upon him to controll him, that is proud and stubborn, not flexible and pliable, that will not stand bare, observe the Ceremonies of his Court, give him his due Titles, nor perform those Rites and Observances which belong to his Highness: So neither is he fitted to walk with God, who is not of a lowly submissive spirit; who is not ready to floop to God, to perform his Worship, to give him that Honour and Glory which belongs to him; who will glory in himself, and not magnifie his Lord.

To walk in the Name of the Lord (Mic. 4: 6.) is to worthip him: and that is done by low Thoughts of our selves, and high Thoughts of God. He that walks wisely, will chuse low ground to walk on: And he that places himself in Imo sno, in his low Condition, is sittest to exalt God in ipsins Summitatem, into his Height. Though the Lord be high, yet he hath respect unto the lowly: but he beholdeth the proud after off, Psal.

1.38. 6. he will not have him in his company.

5. He that walks before God must be of a pleasing Disposition: as the Apostle speaks elegantly, Col. 1. 10. when he prays for the Colossans, that they may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing. Indeed I told you before, walking with God is pleasing God: this is the main thing requisite to our Converse with God, that we have a care to avoid what is offensive to him; as Joseph had, when he said, How shall I doe this great Wickedwess, and sin against God?

He that will please God must imitate God. We must be Followers of God, as dear Children; and walk in love, as he loved us, Eph. 5. 1, 2. He that will walk with God must not be of a quarrelling, wrangling, but a peaceable Disposition. God will not brook him to be with him that persecutes his Fellow-servants, that molests his Children, that is not loving and kind to them that honour him. No man can walk with God,

that loves not them that are born of God.

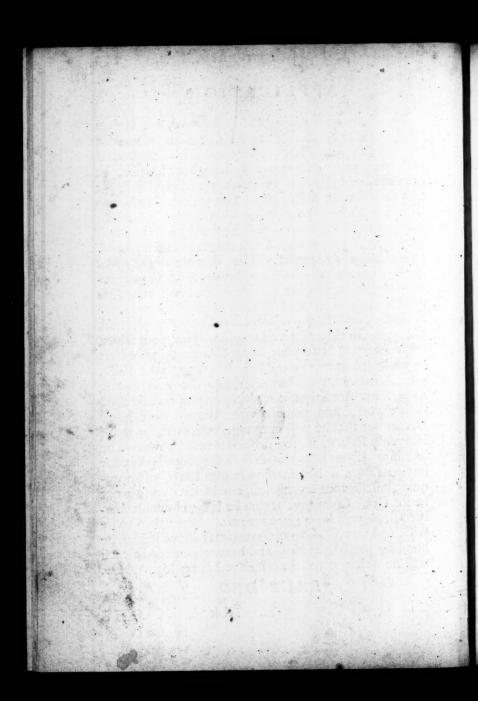
6. He that walks before God must affect the Life of God, that is, an heavenly, holy Conversation: he must not be estranged from the Life that is in God, through the ignorance that is in him, and the hardness of his Heart; as those Gentiles that did walk in the Vanity of their Mind, having their Understanding darkened. Eph. 4. 17, 18. He must be as an obedient Child, not fashioning himself according to the former Lusts, in his Ignorance: but as he which bath called him is holy, so must be be holy in all manner of Conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, as I am holy, I Pet. 1.14, 15, 16. He must walk with Wisedom in the fight of the Lord; not as a rude Clown, but as a Courtier of Heaven. If we say that we have Fellowship with God, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and doe not the Truth: But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, I Joh. I. 6, 7. Our Conversation must be in Heaven; we must seek the things that are above. the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness; we must speak the Language of Heaven, expect all our Good from Heaven, follow the Imployment of Heaven, doe the Will of our Father which is in Heaven. We must fanctifie and extoll his Name, as the Angels doe, if we expect to be like them hereafter: we must so doe here. in the light of the living, as they doe in Heaven, in the Presence of God.

APPLI-

#### APPLICATION.

I have run over a large Field of matter, but such as is of greatest concernment to each of us to be minded of, that so we may know how to walk with God. God hath been with you, you have been kept by him, he hath delivered your Soul from death; and now he looks you should walk before him. You expect (I presume) to rest with him, to stand in his Presence hereafter; that in the great Day of Christ he should own you, and should say, Come, ye bleffed. Oh forget not then to walk before God, and be perfect. They that are ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteons; but shall be as the Chaff, which the wind driveth away. For the Lord knoweth the way of the Righteous, and the way of the Ungodly shall perish, Psal. 1.4, 5, 6. Oh then that you would bethink your felves, wherefore you have your Lives continued, your Feet to walk; I mean, your Understandings, your Wills, your Affections, your Memories, your Tongues, Hands, Eyes, Ears. Are they not made, that you may fet God before you, and prepare your Ways before him? Dream not that he will entertain you hereafter in his Heavenly Palace, if you do not here endeavour to be like him. If you be as brutish Swine, wallowing in your impure Lust; if like fnarling currish Dogs, of an unquiet, mischievous, revengefull, cruel spirit; you are not fit for God's Company. If you be rude, clownish, barbarous. Heaven is no place for you. Learn then to be wife, to know God, to observe him: believe in him, be humble, pleafing of him, and heavenly-minded; then will he welcome you into his everlasting Joy. Amen.

LAUS DEO.



THE

# HOLY MAN'S MEDITATION.

## The Seventeenth SERMON.

PSALM CXIX. 15.

I will meditate in thy Precepts, and have respect unto thy Ways.

Holines in himself, (such as Pharisees were wont to be guilty of,) but that he might give God the Glory of his free Grace, and excite others to a blessed Consociation with him in his Praises of him, the Psalmist doth in this Psalm, with variety of Expressions, and the best of his Skill, most delightfully declare the frame of his Spirit, and the course of his constant Practice. In the verse before my Text he had told us the matter of his Joy, that he rejoyced in the way of God's Testimonies as much as in all Riches: And here he declares his Resolution sutable to his valuation of God's Testimonies, that he was determined, as he had chosen them for the object of his Joy, so to make them

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the imployment of his Studies, the Cynosure or North-star according to which he would steer his course; I will meditate in thy Precepts, and have respect unto thy Ways.

Wherein he declares his purpose,

Talk, about God's Precepts: for the word we translate (meditate) doth also signify to speak or conferre,

and is so translated by some here.

2. Of Eying God's Ways. Which may be underflood either of God's Ways which he commands us to walk in, called the Way of his Precepts: and then the fense is, I will not onely apply my Mind to know what thy Precepts injoyn me; but also I will in my Practice, whatfoever I doe, have mine Eye, that is, my intentive Confideration, on them, as my Rule by which to act. Or else it means God's Ways which he takes in ordering and governing things, which are the Ways of his Providence: and so his Determination is, that he will observe God in what he doeth, that he may give him the Glory of his Wisedom, Goodness, Truth, Justice, in his Promises and Threatnings, and accordingly fear or trust God, and in all things approve himself to him.

From the Words taken in these senses, these four Conclusions do arise.

1. That God's Precepts are the Godly man's Meditation.

2. That they are also the matter of his Talk.

- 3. That in his Practice he beeds God's Direction.
- 4. That God's Works are his Observation.

#### LOBSERVATION.

That God's Precepts are the Godly man's Meditation.

In the first Psalm (vers. 2.) it is said of David's Bleffed man, that his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night: by which the Constancy of his Meditation is expressed. Which is not so to be understood, as if no other Act were to be done but that; that there was to be no Intermission of actuall Reading or Thinking on the words or matter of God's Law: for then all minding and intending other Business and other Duties, whether Sacred or Civill, yea the due use of Recreation by eating and drinking, sleep, and other Refections of the body, (which God allows, yea commands, ) should be finfull. But as we interpret other like Passages concerning continual Praying, (against the Dotage of Euchites or Messalians of old, who, as the Monkish Fraternities fince, thought they were to doe nothing but pray; Shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto him? Luke 18.7. Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my Prayers night and day, 2 Tim. 1. 3.) of a constant course of doing this Duty when other Duties, Offices and Necessities permit: So in this Meditating of David in God's Law, we are to conceive he refolves so to doe it, as not to omit it out of Slothfulness, or finfull Avocation; not out of averseness of Heart to defift from it : but as often and as much as Opportunity, Divine Providence, and the Use of it, did permit and require, he would be occupied therein.

Concerning which profitable Exercise of Meditation, many Directions might be given in respect of the

Acts, Degree, Manner, End and Use thereof.

As God appointed the King of Israel, when he sate on the Throne of his Kingdome, that he should write hima Copy of God's Law in a Book, out of that which was before the Priests, the Levites, and that it should be with him, and that he should reade therein all the days of his life;

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that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of the Law and the Statutes to doe them, Deut. 17.18, 19. So he injoyned the rest of the People, that the words which he commanded should be in the Heart of the whole People of Israel; and that they should teach them diligently unto their Children, and should talk of them when they sate in their houses, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up, Deut. 6.6, 7. Which brings us to the

#### II. OBSERVATION.

That God's Precepts are to be the matter of a Godly

man's Talk.

Yea, God commands that they should bind them for a Sign upon their Hand, and that they should be as Frontlets between their Eyes, and that they should write them upon the Posts of their houses, and on their Gates, Deut.

6. 8, 9.

And that this Precept was not confined to the Five Books of Moses, but that it extended to the rest of the Holy Scriptures, that which is said of Timothy, (2 Tim. 3. 15. that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto Salvation) doth evince. It is also manifest, that the people of the Jews (as they do to this day) did conceive themselves bound by God, old and young, of all Sexes and Ranks, to exercise themselves in reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures, which God vouchsafed to them in all the Books that were by any of the Prophets delivered to them. To which accords that of the Apostle, Rom. 15. 4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

It is then evident, that it was God's Institution and Design,

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Delign, in vouchfafing to communicate to the fons of men the great Treasure of his Oracles, that they should

bufy their Minds and Members about them.

Nor is this sufficient, that they have them in their Houses: or that the Grandees of the Earth for Parts and Learning, the Clergy, Priests, and Religious Votaries, do reade or study them; while the Laiety, or simpler fort, do onely by an implicit Faith rely on their Rulers or Rabbins; as heretofore the Judaicall Pharifees, and at this day their Successours, the Popish Clergy, craftily and deceitfully infinuate into peoples minds. But as God hath promised to write his Laws in their hearts, and put them in their minds; that they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest : so it is the Duty and Property of all that expect Mercy and Fayour from God, to imploy their own Eyes to reade, and their own Ears to hear, what God hath vouchfafed to impart of his Mind, in them, to the fons of men. not onely fo, but also to fearch into the Sacred Scriptures, as our Lord requires, Joh. 5. 39. to seek after the Wisedom therein as for Silver, and search for it as for hidden Treasure, Prov. 2. 4. and when any Doctrine is taught as from God, to doe as it is faid of the Berwans, Act. 17. 11. Who fearched the Scriptures daily. whether the things S. Paul preached were so or no; and withall, speaking the truth in love, to edify one another by communicating what they have found and learned.

And indeed the Law of Gratitude binds us to meditate on God's Precepts, it being one of the greatest Favours from God to Men, that he is pleased to reveal his Will to them. Among the many Mercies for which the Psalmist extolls God's Goodness, after the Commemoration of his Providence in his ordering Peace and Plenty, he concludes thus, Psal. 147. 19, 20. He streeth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments.

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unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any Nation; and as for his Judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord. Which plainly intimates this to have been the top or chief of his Goodness to Israel, not that he seated them in a Land slowing with Milk and Honey, which was the glory of other Lands, Ezek. 20. 6. but that he revealed his Counsells to them, whereby he advanced them above all the people of the Earth; as Moses tells them, Deut. 4. 8. What Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this day?

It would therefore be an high Provocation of God to Anger, fo far to neglect the great Favour he hath shewed in giving us such Holy Precepts and beneficial Revelations of his Counsell, as not to make them our Study, not to consider the Usefulness of them, not to observe our Concernments in them, not to set forth to his Praise his gracious dealing in his notification of them

to us.

But besides, as it is an extreme Neglect of God not to meditate on his Precepts: so it is a most injurious Neglect of our felves and our own Good, to take our selves off from the Contemplation of them. For thereby men deprive themselves of that means, which might make them wifer then those who neglect them, or imploy their minds on any enquiry after Wisedom without them. Which it were easy to demonstrate, by comparing the Wisedom that may be got by them, with the Wisedom of the most renowned Philosophers, and the most profound Rabbins among the Jews, or acutest Schoolmen among the Christians, who have sought the knowledge of Morality or Religion from Inventions and Traditions of men, from their own Reasonings or devised Rules, without the excellent Directions of the Holy Scriptures. Holy David professeth his own experience.

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perience, Psal. 119.97, 98,99, 100. O how love I thy Law! it is my Meditation all the day. Thou through thy Commandments hast made me wiser then mine Enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding then all my Teachers: for thy Testimonies are my Meditation. I understand more then the Ancients, because I keep thy Precepts. And S. Paul tells Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 15. that the Holy Scriptures were able to make

him wife unto Salvation.

The greatest Wisedom is that which guides a man to the greatest Happiness; and that is, when he avoids the greatest Evill, and attains the enjoyment of the best Good. No Evil is greater then God's Wrath; no Good better then God's Favour. Now to the escaping the former, and obtaining the latter, the Meditation on God's Precepts conduceth most effectually. For thereby we avoid Sin against God, which incites him to Anger; and thereby we learn how to please him. which procures his Favour. And therefore it is most evident to be the wifest course we can take, and whereby we can shew most Love to our selves, to Reade, to Hear, to Study and lay to heart God's Word. And herein likewise we shew the greatest Charity to others, by ferioufly endeavouring to make them intelligent therein: it tending most to their Good, if with Meditation there concurre also a Respect to God's Ways. Which leads us to the other part of this Verse, and the Conclusions thence deduced.

#### III. and IV. OBSERVATIONS

That in his Practice a Godly man heeds God's Direc-

That God's Works are his Observation.

The word which is rendred, I will have respect, or,

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I will look, imports the fixing and intentiveness of the Eye upon God's Ways; such as is in a Traveller when he walks, or a Sailour when he fails in the Deep, whom it concerns that they have their eyes waking, and their minds observant, the one of the Path he treads in, the other of the Chanel he steers his Ship in: lest the first either miss his way, or stumble and fall; or the fecond run aground on Quick-fands, or split upon Rocks and Shelves, and so miscarry. The Commandment, saith Solomon, (Prov. 6.23.) is a Lamp, and the Law is Light; and Reproofs of Instruction are the way of life. And therefore as the Eye makes use of the Lamp and Light, for its Direction: so doth the Soul of a Godly man observe the Way of God's Precepts, for his Rule; and the Ways of God's Acting, to encourage him in his Course, and to deterre him from wandering therefrom.

Nor are the Ways of God's Providence, either towards our selves or others, to be let pass without heedfull Observation. For thereby we are accommodated with usefull Arguments to give God the Glory of his Truth, Justice, Goodness, and Power. We have Experiments sitted either to deterre us from Sinning against him, who is a consuming Fire; or to encourage us to serve him with holy Reverence and godly Fear; or to strengthen our Faith in a firm Dependence on him, and a Rehance on the Lord in our greatest Difficulties.

Thus Phineas argues, Josh. 22.17, 20. Is the Iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed to this day? Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a Trespass in the accursed thing, and Wrath fell on all the Congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his Iniquity. That he might by this Argument deterre the Trans-Jordan Israelites from a Schismaticall departure from the God of Israel, and a Communion in Worship with the other Tribes on this side Jordan.

Thus

Thus David, in the great Triall of his Faith and undaunted Fortitude which he shewed in his heroick Encounter with the Giant of Gath, recollects his own Experience of Divine Assistance formerly, and fortifies himself against the fear of that Monster by assurance of the like now. He alleges God's former Providences as the reason of his gallant Resolution to encounter Goliah without any hesitancy now; telling Saul, 1 Sam. 17.36. Thy Servant sew both the Lion and the Bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he

hath defied the Armies of the living God.

As God hath given us his Word, that thereby we may understand his Will: so doth he exercise his Judgments, that we may discern his Excellency. As the Word of God, his Precepts and Promises are to be remembred, that we may believe and obey; and therefore it is the Character of a Righteous person, that the Law of his God is in his Heart, and none of his Steps therefore shall Slide: (Psal. 37.31.) so it is said, Psal. 111. 2, 3,4. The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. God having made his Work honourable and glorious, that his wonderfull Works might be remembred. And therefore a Woe is denounced by the Prophet, Ifa. 5.11, 12. against those Epicurean Senfualists that spent their time in voluptuous Drinking. and pleasant Musick; but regarded not the Work of the Lord, neither considered the Operation of his hands : To which answers that true Censure of the Prophet Jeremiah, (5. 4.) Surely these are poor, they are foolist; for they know not the Way of the Lord, nor the Judgment of their God. In having respect to both kinds of his Ways we glorify him: in neglecting either, we vilify him and live as it were without God in the World.

#### APPLICATION.

Hereby we may discern whether we have the same Spirit with David and other Holy persons in their generation, who have always had their Eyes sixed on God in their Pilgrimage on earth; and their Minds intent on what God saith and doeth, as the principall Object whereon to imploy their Meditations and Exercitations.

When we reade of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other Holy persons, that they malked with God, we may thereby collect that they moved in a higher Sphere then this lower World: and though their Bodies were carried up and down on the Superficies of the Earth; yet their Hearts and Spirits were with God, him they set before them, and kept close to him. And so David prosesset of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my. God: For all his Judgments were before me, and I did not put away his Statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept my self from mine Iniquity. And S. Paul, Phil. 3. 20. Our Conversation is in Heaven, whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Surely they that seriously mind being with God hereafter, must make it their business to get acquaintance with him here: they that look for their Portion in Heaven, must have their Conversation in Heaven while

they are upon Earth.

As it is the description of a wicked man, that God is not in all his Thoughts, that God's Judgments are far above out of his sight, that he casts God's Word behind his back, that he hides his face from God: So on the other side, nothing is a more reall demonstration of a Holy person then this, that he meditates on God's Precepts, and hath respect unto his Ways.

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Oh that it might be verified of each of you, that you have the same Mind that David had. But, alas! how far are men degenerated from this Patriarch! how few write after his Copy! Survey the Motions of your Mind, of your Tongues, of your Eyes; you will, I fear, find too little of David's Imployment used by you. Do not your Inquiries, your Conscience, your Practice, shew how little your Thoughts are upon God, his Be-

ing, his Counfells, Commands, or Works?

How sedulously do you eye and observe what Way is most in credit at Court; what Disposition is in the Grandees of the Times; what is the most taking way for Preferment in the Land; what the most conducible either to get Wealth, or else to procure Ease or Pleafure? Are not these things, or such like, all that is sought after or minded, when we are still asking after News at Court, in City, or Country? when we listen so greedily after what Intelligence the most inquisitive men can give us of these things?

But feldome do you apply your felves to know how to rectify your Consciences, by right Information concerning God's Will; little notice do you take of God's stirring up your Hearts to pray, his answering your Prayers, or rewarding your Obedience, or punishing your Transgressions. How sew Memorialls are kept either of publick Plagues or common Deliverances? How solicitous are we to please Men? how careless to please God? how intent and diligent to promote our Earthly, how negligent and slack to farther Heavenly-Designs?

Deceive not your selves, such a posture of your spirits shews an Estrangedness from the Life that is in God; and manisests want of interest either in his Favour here, or Glory hereafter. Learn rather, with the Psalmist; to meditate on God's Works, and to talk of his Doings; to hearken what the Lord God will say; to doe as the Pro-

L13 phet,

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phet, Hab. 2. 1. to stand upon your Watch, and set you upon the Tower, and watch to see what he will say to you, and what you shall answer, when you are reproved. In a word, That God may have his Eye on you for good, you must have your Eyes on his Ways, to serve him sincerely, and glorify him perpetually. Which he grant for Christ's sake; To whom, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

DAVID's

# DAVID'S JOY.

# The Eighteenth SERMON.

P's A L. CXXIJ. I.

I was glad when they faid unto me, Let us goe
into the House of the Lord.

HIS Psalm is intituled to David: and it is very probable, that it was then composed by him, when he brought the Ark of God to Jerusalem, and there fixed the Seat of his Kingdome over Israel, and ordered the Services of the Temple, with the Officers of Justice; for which a solemn Gratulation was made i Chron. 16. And to shew that now he was Voti compos, had attained the great Desire of his Soul, Psal. 42. 1, 2. in somewhat a like Affection to that of Simeon when he found Christ, he congratulates the joynt Alacrity of the people with him, in the words of my Text, I was glad when they said unto me, &c.

It is true, the Temple was not built by David, but by Solomon his Son: yet David had prepared a place for the Ark of God in his City, and pitched for it a Tent, where there were offered Burnt-offerings and Peace-offerings before the Lord, I Chron. 15. 1. and 16. 1. and certain of the Levites were appointed to minister before the Ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel, I Chron. 16. 4. For which teason it became the House of the Lord then, and thither

the Tribes went up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Tefimony of Israel, the Ark of the Testimony, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord, vers. 4. of this Psalm. And for this he expresseth his exceeding Gladness in

my Text. Whence we may observe,

I. David's pious Disposition: He prefers the Honour of God before his own Dignity. Though the Settling of the Kingdome on him were matter of much Toy, specially after so long a Persecution as he had undergone during Saul's life, and those so frequent and fad Removals and Flittings from place to place, which made him bewail his Condition, Pfal. 120. 5, 6. Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar. My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace: Yet, ( as that which cut him most to the Heart in his Exile was his Absence from the Tabernacle, and those bitter Sarcasms of his Enemies, when they faid to him infultingly, Where is now thy God? fo now) he most rejoyceth that he is restored to the House of God; that now God's Worship was begun to be solemnized, and he with the people of Israel frequented it with Gladness. This was the constant frame of David's Spirit; as may appear, in that he laid aside his Robes of Royal Majesty, and (putting on a linen Ephod in company of the Priests) danced before the Ark: and when he was derided by Michal his Wife, as if it shewed Lightness in him; he justified himself as being guilty of no Indecency, since it was before the Lord, who had chosen bim before ber Father, and before all his House, to appoint him Ruler over the people of the Lord, over Ifrael. He knew his Exaltation was from God, his Favour was better to him then his Kingdom; therefore in it he rejoyced more then in his Regality. and thought he could not rejoyce enough in the Lord, nor fufficiently debase himself before him: and this made made him resolutely tell his Wife, that he would play before the Lord, and be more vile then thus, and base in his own fight; being affured that this was the ready way to his Honour. 2 Sam. 6. 21, 22. And not content with this demonstration of his glorying in God, in the next Chapter, vers. 2. he complains of it as a reason of his Discontent, that he dwelt in a house of Cedar, when the Ark of God dwelt within Curtains. So true was it of him which he professeth Pfal. 69.9. The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up; and the Reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. Which was more exactly and amply fulfilled in our Lord Christ, to whose Purging of the Temple from the profane and unrighteous Abuses thereof the first part is applied 70h. 2. 17. and the second to his Sufferings for his Faithfulness towards the Spiritual House of God, by testifying the Truth of God notwithstanding the Contradiction of Sinners, Rom. 15. 3.

That this is a Duty common to all, to prefer the Honour of God, and the Service of his House, before any Grandeur or Concernment of our own, is abundantly manifest from the Precedency of the First Table of the Law before the Second; the Precept of Loving God, before the Command of Loving our Neighbour: from our petitioning (according to the Lord's Prayer) for the Hallowing God's Name, the Coming of his Kingdome, the Doing his Will, before the supplying of our Bread, the Remission of our Sins, or our Deliverance from the Evil one's Temptations: from the Exceptions God takes against them that built themselves cieled bouses, when God's House lay waste; them that had in their flock a male, and vowed to the Lord a corrupt thing: from his punishing such Slighting of him, and afferting his Regal Majesty, to convince men of the transcendent Regard that is due to him above all Potentates:

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from the Protestations and Practice of Saints and Holy persons, preferring the well-being of God's House and Service before their chief Mirth; peremptorily refusing Delights, neglecting any other Glory or otherwise desirable Advantage, when God's House or Honour is impaired; Mourning for it more then for their own Losses; and reckoning them for their best-deserving Friends that promote the Service of God, and them for their greatest Enemies that hinder it. The Reasons of

which are,

1. On God's part, His superlative Excellency, in comparison of whom all the Glory, Beauty, Goodliness, Power, Wisedom, or what-ever else is magnified in Creatures, is but a Shadow, yea Vanity, or a mere Nothing. All the Nations of the Earth, in respect of him, are as a drop of a Bucket, counted as the small dust of the balance, as Nothing, Ila. 40. 15, 17. And therefore to prefer our own Honour, the Honour of any of the Grandees of the world, or the glorious Spirits of Heaven, before the Worship, the Regalia or Royalties of the Great God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, is to prefer a Torch-light before the Sun-light; to esteem a Candle more then the glorious Lights of Heaven. As there is in God more Glory then in all the Creatures; so his Name, his Service should be magnified and adhered unto above and against all the Services and Names that stand in opposition to or competition with his.

2. Nor is this Prelation less due on our part, because of our Obligation of Gratitude to him: Justice exacts it from us. It is Debitum morale, and naturale, that we should honour our Father that begat us, our Preachers that instruct us, our Princes that protect us, our Benefactours that help us. All these is God to us in a superlative manner. He is the Father that begat m, the

Rock

Rock that formed w: we are the Work of his Hands, and the Sheep of his Pasture. He is our Shepherd, therefore we lack nothing; on him we depend from our mother's womb. It is he that teacheth w Wisedom more then the beasts of the Earth. He is a Sun and a Shield to us: what-ever good we receive from any, it is first derived from him. He is the Fountain of living waters: all Creatures are but broken Cisterns, that can hold no water. And therefore undoubtedly he should be preferr'd before all, and by all. Which that it may be done, we should have the like Affection as David had; and that is the next thing observable in this Text.

II. David's Joy at the People's Forwardness to joyn

in God's Worship.

As David preferred God's Service before his own Dignity, so he rejoyced in the Conjunction of others with him therein. This was it which gladded his Heart, that not onely himself and his own House were ready to goe up to the House of the Lord, but all the people of Israel likewise were forward to joyn with him in God's Service. When the People offered willingly to the Lord for the building of the Temple, it is faid, David the King also rejoyced with great Joy, 1 Chron. 29. 9. How often in the Psalms doth he invite all people to praise God? Praise him all ye Nations, Psal. 117. 1. is a Prophecy, containing his Prayer for the Convertion of the Gentiles, Rom. 15. 11. Our Saviour teacheth us to pray, not onely that we our felves who pray, but all others may hallow God's Name. When the Pharifees would have had the Children and Multitude, that cried Hosanna with his Disciples, rebuked; our Saviour not onely justifies them, but also animates them to it, telling the Pharifees, that if those should hold their peace, the Stones would cry out, Luke 19.40. Malignant spirits, that feek the Praise of men, their own Power and In-Mm 2 terest.

terest, envy the forwardness of people to joyn in the true Worship of God, and the Duties of Godliness. But to a holy and humble Heart it is a joyous thing. As Moses said once to Joshua, Enviest thou for my sake? I would that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that God would put his Holy Spirit upon them, Num. 11. 29. Hereto every upright heart is moved, both by the Love he bears to Men, and the Love he hath to God who is honoured.

1. Love to others makes him that loves them not feek his own Good onely, but their Good also joyntly with his own. Now there cannot be a greater Good to any person, then when his Heart and Ways are set to glorisie God. The best turn we can doe a man is, to bring him into Acquaintance with God, so as that his Fellowship be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And therefore if we love men indeed, we cannot but rejoyce with them when they address themselves to seek God.

2. Love also to God will cause this Rejoycing at the Associating of others with us in his Service. The Corinthians Bounty to the Saints is commended from hence, that it is abundant by many Thanksgivings unto God, whiles by the experiment of such ministration they glorifie God, 2 Cor. 9. 12, 13. We pray that all may fanctifie God's Name: what we pray for fincerely, we desire affectionately: and what we desire affectionately to obtain, we rejoyce in it heartily when it is acquired. No man prays to God rightly, but he who earnestly desires God's Glory by all: the more therefore glorifie him, the more is their Joy increased who love God truly; especially when (as here) the Service is voluntary, ready, with alacrity; when they fay, (as it is in my Text ) Let us goe into the House of the Lord. Which leads me to some farther Observations.

III. The

III. The People's Willingness and Forwardness: They invite each other to goe into the House of the Lord. Not to the house of Mirth and Jovialty; not to the house of Bacchus or Baal; not to the Idol-Temple, or other house of Iniquity. And therein is difcernible the End and Motive of this their Invitation. It was, no doubt, that they might worship God; as those did who went up into the Temple to pray, as it is faid of the Pharisee and Publican in the Parable; or, as it is in the fourth verse of this Palm, to the Testimony of Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. Thus it is said, Luke 1. 10. while the Priest burnt Incense in the Temple, the whole multitude of the people were praying without. And of Anna, Luk. 2. 37. she departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fasting and Prayers night and day. And in respect of this Practice our Saviour Matth. 21. 13. allegeth out of Isa. 56. 7. that the House of God was to be the house of Prayer, not of Merchandise or other profane uses. Hereto accords that which is foretold Isa. 2. 3. of the New-Testament-times, allusively to the practice of the Jews, Many people shall goe and say, Come ye, and let us goe up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. This then is the genuine End of going to the House of God, or the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth, that we may pray together, and praise God with one Heart; that we may learn the Will of God; that we may attend to the Preaching of the Word, to the Reading of the Scriptures, to the Sacraments of Christ; and, in a word, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorifie God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which directs us also to consider,

IV. The Motive and Mode of their going up to the House of the Lord.

The Motive is implied in the determination to whose house they would goe up, to wit, to the House of Jehovah, the true and living God: not to the House of Dagon, Moloch, or any of the Gentile Vanities; but to his House who was their Defence, the Holy one of Israel, their King, Psal. 89. 18. It is Faith in God as the true God, and in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which must excite us to goe to the Church on Earth, to joyn with it in Holy Services; and to approach boldly to the Throne of Grace in the Temple of Heaven, where Christ our High Priest appears for us: it is that must quicken our Hearts, that must carry our Feet to the

House of God and Religious exercises.

Alas! many come to the Church out of Custome, or to avoid the Penalties of the Law, yea perhaps to sleep there; as if they had no sense of God's Presence, no spiritual Use of holy Ordinances, no need of holy Instructions, no want of God's Favour, or Christ's Intercession: and therefore they neither exercise Faith in Prayer or Praising God, nor have any seeling of the Worth of Spiritual Services. They are no better after they have been at Church then they were before; no more humbled for Sin, nor amended in their Conversation, nor intelligent in the Doctrine of the Gospel, nor zealous for God's Glory, nor helpfull to edifie one another, then if they had kept at home, or been in profane Company. They are not like these in my Text, who here invited each other to goe to the Honse of the Lord.

Which implies the Mode or Manner of their going.
Three things I conceive implied in this Expression;
Reverence, Unanimity, Alacrity.

I. In that they goe to the House of the Lord, it in-

timates that they did present themselves there with Dread and Awe of God. They were wont to say, as it is Psal. 95.6. O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Thus it should be with us: And therefore this Psalm is appointed in our Liturgy to be read in the beginning of Divine Service. Our Reverence should be not barely in respect of the presence of persons of Eminency, whether Ministers or People; but more in respect of God's Presence. We should be like affected as Jacob was, and say as he did, Gen. 28.17. How dreadfull is this Place! this is none other but the Honse of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven. All Talking, Gazing, and other irreverent Carriage, (as is too too often among us,) even while we are here about Holy Duties, shews an irreligious and ungodly Spirit, and cannot but be odious to God, and bring his

Curse upon us.

2. Their Unanimity is intimated in their Invitation of each other, and joynt Affociation in going to the House of the Lord. And indeed this is also of very great moment in the publick Worship of God, that, as it was in the Primitive times, we be of one Heart and one Soul, Act. 4.32. that we continue together with one accord, breaking bread, and lift up our voice with one accord, by praifing God, Act. 2. 46. and 4. 24. To think to get Peace with God by our Supplications, when we have unpeaceable Hearts towards others; to have Forgiveness from God, while we forgive not our Brethren; to have God's Love, while we love not one another; is a vain Delusion. To pray together at Church, and quarrel at home; to fit in one Seat here, and to fight one with another abroad; to fay Amen to the Prayer for Peace, and yet to study Strife; is monstrous Hypocrifie. To praise God in singing Psalms here, and yet to curse and revile one another abroad, is horrible

ble Impiety. But to brawl, contend for places in the Church, before or immediately after Praying together, shews a much more wicked Heart! For where Envy and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil work, Jam. 3.

vers. 16. 2

3. Therefore the third thing implied here, Alacrity, should attend our going to the House of the Lord. We should serve the Lord with Gladness, come before his Presence with Rejoycing, as it is Psal. 100. 2. which is read in our Liturgie after the Second Lesson. God loves a chearfull Worshiper, as well as a chearfull Giver. As we would have God delight in us, so we must delight our selves in the Lord, and readily and freely, out of choice, come to the House of the Lord, and there serve him.

#### APPLICATION.

And now give me leave both to complain, and to admonish you. God hath done for us greater things then he did for David: his Gospel, his Church, his Worship is settled among us in a more Spiritual and Heavenly manner then it was among the Jews: we are not carried away as the Gentiles, who were led by dumb Idols: we have not mere Latin Service, not the Worship of a piece of Bread, as the Papists; nor are we fed with Legendary Tales or mens Traditions: much less are we, like the barbarous Heathens, awed by Oracles, the terrible Apparitions of Devils, Wizzards, and fuch Imps of Hell, as many of them are; or cheated with the ridiculous Fictions and Delufions of that impure Impostour Mahomet; or imposed on by the Rabbinical Dotages of Jews: And yet we come to God's Service with no better Devotion, nay, perhaps less, then these do to their false Worship. How

How few prefer God's Service before their own worldly Business, God's Honour before their own Profit? How many are so far from inciting others to goe to God's House, that they are readier to draw them away from it? Yea, many chuse to keep at home, or to goe to worse places and company. Many have no other End in coming to Church, but to keep their wont, to doe as others. Others come either out of a vain Affectation to shew their Bravery, or a Curiosity to hear fome eloquent Preacher, as those did Ezek. 33.30, 31, 32. with affection to one party, opposition to another, yea with a contradicting Spirit. How many come hither without Faith, or sense of God's Presence, as if they came to a Court? yea to sport or play? With what Drowziness, Irreverence, Heedlesness, do many appear here? How many are weary with the Service, with the Sermon? to whom it is tedious to fit one hour to hear God's Word, though they can endure to fit whole Nights and Days at their Pastimes, or to be imployed in any mischievous Design? How many bring their Bodies hither, and their Minds the while are roving over the world? How many are filled with unclean Lusts, Contentions, revengefull Imaginations and Devices, even while they are in the Church? How many come to carp at the Preacher, or justle with their Brethren? How many pray with their Mouths, and curse with their Hearts?

Alas! how will such bear Crucem Domini, the Lord's Cross, who are so backward to goe in Domum Domini, into the Lord's House? How can such expect to appear in the Temple of God in Heaven, who defile the House of God on Earth? How weary would they be of the Service there, to whom his Worship here is so

tedious?

Brethren, let me deal plainly with you; It is an o-

minous Presage, an ill Sign, that such as now are so averse from the House of God and his Service here, are never likely to enter into the Temple of God in Heaven; it would be a Burthen to them, and they to it.

Oh then bethink your lelves of coming hither, as David and his People did. Prefer the Honour of God before any Interest of your own. Excite one another to goe to God's House, out of Love to one another, out of Love and Gratitude to God. Goe not to any Idol-service, or ungodly Meetings. Come to God's Service with Faith, with Concord and Unanimity, with Chearfulness and Reverence. And know, that if you meet with God in his Ordinances, he will meet with you in his Mercies. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

DELIGHT

# DELIGHT in GOD

THE

# Christian's Gain.

## The Nineteenth SERMON.

P s A L. XXXVIJ. 4.

Delight thy felf in the Lord, and he shall give
thee thy Heart's desire.

HIS Psalm is wholly doctrinall, somewhat artificially composed after the order of the Hebrew Alphabet; it is likely, for the more ready learning and easie remembring of it. The matter of it is, a Receipt to cure that Lipothymie or Faintness of Spirit which is incident to the best men, when they see the worst to prosper. Which as it is in appearance rationall, so it is highly dangerous, as tending to undermine our Faith in God's Providence, and to divert our Course from the Via Regia, the high and right Way of holy Obedience to him, to a walking in Byways of our own chusing.

To prevent which (after some Directions against Impatience, and Distrust of God) this Dose is here prescribed, by one that could say Probatum est, even by Holy David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who had by his

Nn 2

own Experience found it true, and the most sovereign Medicine and Cordiall in this case. He had observed, That notwithstanding the wicked man prospered a while, and like a Comet blazed much; yet it was but as a Meteor, a Blazing-star, that would soon vanish: But that he who trusts in God, and delights in him, should be as a Fixed Star, which, though it be clouded or benighted for a time, yet it hath a permanent Light, and shall break out of its Obscurity. That it is therefore best for such a one, in the greatest Luster of the Wicked, and in the most dismall estate that befalls himself, yet to delight himself in the Lord, and to affure himself that he will give him the Desire of his Heart.

Which words you may at first View perceive to con-

tain in them,

1. A Precept; Delight thy self in the Lord. Affect not the Prosperity of Evil men. Though they mount up to Heaven, in Wealth, Honour and Power, so as that, in their Luciferian Pride, they say in their heart, We will ascend into Heaven, exalt our throne above the Stars of God; we will ascend above the heights of the Clouds, we will be like the Most high: yet do thou humbly, quietly, patiently, contentedly delight thy self in the Lord.

2. A Promise; He shall give thee, in the conclusion, the Desires, or Petitions, of thine Heart: either in that Deliverance thou wouldst have; or that Comfort or

Preferment which he thinks best for thee.

So that from hence arise two Conclusions of much

importance.

1. That it is best to delight our selves in God in the most elevated estate of Evill men, and in our own most dejected Condition.

2. That such as doe so, shall have their Hearts Desire, and in fine speed better then if they had been in a like illustrious estate to that of Wicked men.

I shall

I shall address my felf to handle both in their order, with what brevity and perspicuity I can.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That it is best to delight our selves in God in the most elevated estate of Evill men, and in our own most dejected Condition.

Delight is an inclining Affection of the Soul, upon the apprehension of some pleasing Good that is sutable to the Mind: and it is conceived in the womb of the Heart; but not resting there, it manifests it self by the motions of the Members, by the speech of the Tongue, glances of the Eyes, hearkning of the Ears, and by other gestures of the Members, which discover the Com-

placency of the Spirit within.

Delighting then in the Lord, is, for a man to have pleasing Thoughts of God, and thereby strengthening his Heart and Mind against all Objections concerning God or himself, against all Fears and Occurrences which might cast down his Spirit. Many sadning Objects do often present themselves even to the most Holy men on earth. We find David sometimes complaining that God had cast him off; I am cut off from before thine eyes: Holy Job, that God hid his Face from him, and held him for his Enemy. Such Complaints are frequent, Thou hast cast us off, and puttest us to shame. Wherefore hidest thou thy Face? Why sayest thou, O Jacob, My way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is passed over from my God? Others cry, Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked prosper?

Most fully we find this Argument urged against God's Providence, even to the staggering of that Holy Psalmist, in Psal. 73.2, &c. where he relates his Temptation, and his Recovery out of it. For notwithstan-

ding what his Eyes saw, his Earsheard, his stelshy Reafon suggested to him, of the Happiness of Evil men,
and the vanity of Godly courses; yet he upholds himself by delighting in the Lord; and thus expressent
himself in that Psalm: Vers. 1. Truly God is good to
Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart; and after, vers.
23, 24, 25, 26, 28. Nevertheless I am continually with
thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt
guide me with thy Counsell, and afterwards receive me to
Glory. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is
none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and
my Heart faileth; but God is the strength of my Heart,
and my portion for ever. It is good for me to draw near

to God: I have put my Trust in the Lord God.

Such Apprehensions as these do affect the Spirits of a man, as the breaking out of the Sun doth the Eyes, after it hath been overcast with thick Clouds in the day, or concealed by the Darkness of the night. Then the Light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the Sun. So it is with the Soul, after such Perplexities and Affrightments and Disconsolations of Spirit as are incident to the most holy Saint, by reason of the seeming Disorders and dismall Occurrences in the world which are obvious to him. When he recollects himself, and determines against all Arguings ad oppositum, that the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield; the Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of boafts, bleffed is the man that trusteth in thee, Pfal. 84. 11, 12. then he delights himself in the Lord, as the most pleasant and eligible Good thing, as his Sun and his Shield; and accordingly fixes his Contemplations on God, quickens, chears, confirms, raises up his Spirits in the remembrance of him; expresses himself in holy Hymns, in devout Prayers, in wife Observations of his Doings,

in commemorating of his Works and his Word, in holy Conferences, and such like ways, as shew that none is so amiable to him as God, none to be adhered to in comparison of him, none to be glorisied like unto God.

Conformably hereto, he delights in the Confideration of God's most excellent Being: that he is not like the Vanities of the Nations: that he is the living God, and an everlasting King: that in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength: that there is none holy as the Lord, no Rock like unto our God: that great is our Lord, and of great Power, his Understanding is infinite: that he is mercifull and gracious, abundant in Goodness and Truth.

He delights also in the beholding and observation of his Works; which however they are not minded by them who are alienated from the Life that is in God, yet to the Godly enlightned Soul they appear Great, so that in Admiration of them he is affected like the Psalmist, Psal. 8. 1. O Lord our God, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth, who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens! Psal. 104. 24. In wisedom hast thon made them all, and rulest all. He is holy in all his Ways, and righteous in all his Works: and therefore are they sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His Work is bonourable and glorious; and his Righteousness endureth for ever. And hereupon the Psalmist resolves, Psal. 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.

Nor is his Delight less in God's Word then in his Works. I will praise thy Name, saith David, (Psal 138. 2.) for thy Loving-kindness and for thy Truth: for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name. And thus he often professeth, that the Word of God, his Judgments were more to be desired then Gold, yea, then much fine Gold; sweeter then Hony and the Hony-comb: that

that not onely his Word of Promise was his Comfort in his Affliction, for by it he was quickened; but that he greatly delighted in God's Commands, they were the foy of his heart: And Holy Job, (23. 12.) I have esteemed the Word of his mouth more then my necessary Food.

But Holy mens greatest Delight in God is, when by Faith in Christ they apprehend God to be their God, and they his People; that he dwells in them, they are his Temple; that they are made by him Kings and Priests to him by his Spirit; that he is their Father through Christ, they his Children; that they have access to him by the Faith of Christ, and are assured of an Inheritance above with him. When they understand this, that Christ is All to them, they delight in the Almighty, and lift up their face unto God with Joy, as it is

70b 22. 26.

Now this indeed is best for the Godly, thus to delight themselves in the Lord, even in their own lowest Conditions, and their Oppressours highest, because the greatest Good that Evil men have is but vain. Be it Plenty, Peace, Honour, Liberty, Power, Pleasure, or what-ever else is valued by men that have their Portion in this life, it is but an imperfect, fading, vexing Good; much of it is such as Beasts injoy more fully then they, who have more Delight in their Food and sensitive Pleasure then Men have. Applause, Honours, Wealth, are but Toys, such as Childish persons delight in rather then wife Men. Philosophers, by the Light of Nature, have censured them as empty of reall Worth; not good, because they made not the Possessours of them good. Wisedom and Vertue are by them preferred before them. Yea, they bring often much Vexation, in stead of Delight. In acquiring and Using them is much Vanity. In the midst of Laughter, the Heart is sorrowfull; Solomon Styles it Madness. But Delight in the Lord

Lord is the most rationall, exquisite, durable Delight: far above not onely Epicurus his Pleasure, and Zeno's Vertue, and Seneca's Tranquillity of mind; but also Solomon's Glory, his Wisedom, his Knowledge of the Properties of Natural bodies, and what-ever Excellency (short of Acquaintance with God) he was endued He confesseth as much in the close of his Penitentialls: and before him his Father David, Pfal. 4.6,7. There be many that say, Who will shew us any Good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon ws. Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart, more then in the time that their Corn and their Wine increased. makes the Saints delight in Prayer and Praise, and other Worship of God; it being their Privilege as well as their Duty to delight themselves in the Lord, Isa. 58. 14. and according to the Defire of their Heart. Which brings me to the

#### II. OBSERVATION.

That they who delight themselves in the Lord shall have their Hearts Desire, and in sine speed better then they who

are in the most illustrious estate of Wicked men.

The principal Desire of one that delights himself in God is, to glorifie God: that is the main End of such as glory in God, that they may doe all to his Glory. Therefore are they taught to make this their first Petition, Hallowed be thy Name; and to that end to pray, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Even in God's most severe Dealings with them, they say with those Isa. 26. 8. Yea, in the way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee: the desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee. To which that of the Apostle, Phil. 1. 20. is conso-

nant; According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnissed in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. That which is said by David, but most truly verified of our Lord Christ, is true of all that delight in the Lord, Psal. 40. 8. I delight to doe thy Will, O my God; yea, thy Law is

within my Heart.

And this their Desire God always grants: so that, however he that delights in the Lord be assaulted with Temptations, be benighted in his Apprehensions of God's Favour, though Heaviness may endure for a night, Joy shall come in the morning; though he miss of his Way, yet he shall find his Errour, and return into it again. The Steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with

his hand, Pfal. 37. 23, 34.

Next unto these ultimate and supreme Ends, the Defire of his Soul who delights in the Lord is, to fee God. How earnestly did Moses beg the fight of God's Face? How often doth David bemoan his Absence from God's Worship at his Temple? As the Hart (saith he) panieth after the water-brooks, so panieth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Pfal. 42. 1, 2. And in the next Pfalm, verf. 3. O fend out thy Light and thy Truth : let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy Hill and to thy Tabernacles. So Saint Paul, Phil. 1. 23. I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is best of all. And this Desire God will give them at last who delight in him. Bleffed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Matth. 5. 8. Now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we Shall

(1)

shall be like him; for we shall see him as be is, I fob. 3. 2. Manutenentia Divina, God's supporting Grace here, and Visio beatifica, the Fruition of God hereafter, are two grand Defires of Souls that delight in God; these they petition for, and he will grant them both.

There are other Desires which they have, as the Prosperity of God's Church, the Downfall of their Enemies; which the Lord will also at last accomplish. though not without much Contention, and long Waiting. They shall overcome the Powers of darkness, and the World; they shall see the people of God above their Enemies, by the blond of the Lamb, and by the word of their Testimony, though they lay down their

Lives for it.

Other Defires of outward Bleffings God grants not always in the kind, but often in some Equivalent. He repairs that which they lose for Christ and his Gospell, by inward Comfort and Spirituall Strength. Though they be in Want, or under Persecution, yet they know how to abound, in that they have learned in what soever estate therewith to be content. They can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth them. If they have a Thorn in the Flesh, a Messenger of Satan to buffet them, and it still molest them; yet the Grace of God is not denied them, and it is sufficient for them; his Strength is perfected in their Weakness. Many Desires of particular Bleffings are granted them; and this one comprehensive Privilege belongs to them, that all things work together for good to them who love God, Rom. 8.28.

#### APPLICATION.

It remains then that we learn this way of Thriving, by delighting our selves in the Lord. Self-love is naturall; every man desires his own Good: but all take 00 2 not not the right way to attain it. God made Man upright, or simple; but he hath sought out many Inventions. Many ways are devised by men for the attaining their Ends, and many Ends propounded by them. The Desires of men are almost as various as their Faces; and their Designs and Courses are almost as manifold as

their Heads : So many Men, so many Minds.

Among you who are my present Auditours, though you meet here about the same Business, the Serving of God, yet how sew in truth do desire to know him aright, or to serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind? Even in this very Action how sew mind God's Glory? How many observe onely the Custom, in coming to Church? or perhaps some worser Motives bring them hither, and sinfull Thoughts possess them here. And no marvell then if they grow not in Knowledge and holy Obedience; are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth; yea grow worse and worse: because they delight not themselves in the Lord, but aim onely at the feeding their Eyes, or the tickling their Ears, or some other sinister Ends of their own.

As these mens Hearts are not towards God, so neither is God's towards them: they have no Pleasure in God, nor God in them. How many of you are there of whom those things are verified which we reade Isa. 58. 2. They seek me daily, and delight to know my wass, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and for sook not the Ordinance of their God: they ask for the Ordinances of Justice, they take Delight in approaching to God? and yet for want of reall Delighting in God, it may be your lot at last to hear Christ say to you, I know you not: depart from me, you workers of Iniquity. Is it not true of you, which the Prophet said of his Hearers, that they came and sate before the Prophet, as God's People.

People, and they heard his words; but they would not doe them: for with their Mouth they shewed much Love, but their Hearts went after their Covetonsness? The Prophet was unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an Instrument: for they heard his words, but did them not, Ezek. 33.31,32.

A Sermon is to most but as an Oration in Schools: the Delivery, the Composure is observed, and perhaps censured; but the Matter is not learned, their Hearts not bettered, their Ways not amended, God not gloristed. After Dismission, yet neither the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the Love of God, nor the Communion of the Holy Spirit, remains in them; but worldly Projects, earthly Designs, carnall Practices are still prosecuted. Yea, their Hearts are more hardened, more estranged from God and the Lise that is in him; and their Wisedom remains earthly, sensual, and devillish. No marvell is such find no Incomes of Grace, no Consolation in Christ, no spirituall growth in Godliness.

Oh that you would ask your selves, whether this Guilt lie not on you: and that you would now at last apply your selves throughly to delight your selves in God, especially in these great Duties of Prayer and Hearing his Word; lest when you would have your great Desire of seeing God's Face in the great Day of Christ's appearing, ye be shut out of his Presence, and be cast into outer Darkness, where is nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Delight in the Lord now, that he may delight in you for ever.

Which he grant, &c. Amen.

#### LAUS DEO.

Sang I well ! The state of the s Regard on your sand that you won't revent the when he was the state of eldycooth availability of simple in the rear Danies of Layer and to very seep of a niew of the control of the collection o a reconstruction of the transcent to and malling, and open a graph fact, a though disvo tol roy ni

CAUCADEON

THE

# GOOD MAN'S SECURITY.

### The Twentieth SERMON.

1 PET. iij. 13.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?

Know you all desire Security and Protection from Harm; and loe here S. Peter directs you to it: he tells you, that you may best your selves procure an Act of Indemnity. No Weapons, no Guard, no Laws, no Magistrates can better desend you from Injuries, then your own good Carriage: And who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?

The Apostle in the beginning of the foregoing Chapter acquaints the Christian Jews in the Dispersion with the great Preferments and Emoluments they had by Christ; and after applies himself to direct them in some special Duties, which he begins at vers. 11. of that Chapter. Officium sequitur Beneficium; Benefits by Christ require Duties sutable to Christ's Precepts and Example. Particularly in this Chapter, vers. 8, 9. you have Unity, Mercy, Love and Courteousness commended;

ded; evil Deeds and evil Speech forbidden; Bleffing of God and Men injoyned. Which are farther urged by a Creation out of the Psalmist, Psal.34.12, &c. And then are superadded the words of my Text, And who is

he that will harm you, if, &c?

Where the particle [And] is not to be taken connexive, (faith Beza,) but to denote something more, as if it were read, Furthermore who will harm you, or vexyon, if ye be Followers, Imitatours, of that which is Good? specially in Christ, who was propounded for their Example, Chap. 2. 21. even in that point of not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but blessing, which was injoyned vers. 9.

To be Followers of that which is Good then, is, to be Imitatours of those good things in Christ's carriage, words and deeds, which he had before commended to them; and which also the words of the Psalmist cited vers. 10, 11. exhort to: to wit, to refrain the Tongue from Evil, and the Lips that they speak no Guile; to eschewevil, and doe good; to seek Peace, and ensue it.

Some Copies read Endwlal, that is, be Zelots of that which is Good: which is the term used Gal. 4. 18. It is good always to be zealows in a good thing. Now Zeal notes Ardency of Affections, both in the Desire of a thing, Delight in it, and Love or Well-willing towards it; as also Fear of missing it, Anger against that which opposeth us, Jealousie or Distrust of that which tends to deprive us of the thing we are zealous for, Emulation of others who prosecute it: in a word, an Intension of the Affections, an earnestness of Endeavours in the most eminent degree, and eager Pursuit of the thing which we affect. And so we may take in both Readings, Who is he that will harm, or shall vex, you, or afflict you with evil, if ye be zealows Followers of that which is Good, specially imitating the Example of Christ,

Now this is proposed by way of Interrogation, which usually implies a peremptory Negation; Who will harm you? that is, None will harm you, or, None shall be able to harm you. Which cannot be understood absolutely and universally, as if in no case any could or would harm them that follow that which is Good. The contrary is supposed in the next verse, that they might suffer for Righteousness sake. But it is so to be taken as such proverbial Speeches usually are understood; For the most part, or usually, men do not harm them who are Followers of that which is Good: or, Usually they speed better then others. As when it is said, A good Tree cannot bring forth bad Fruit, that is, it doth not so usually or frequently. So here, Men usually do not harm Sheep, but let them feed quietly: Men do not ordinarily vex them that are studious of Good. But as men hunt after Foxes and Wolves, and other ravenous Beasts; so do they cry after a Thief, Job 30.5. they pursue after Murtherers, Thieves, Malefactours, Busie-bodies in other mens matters, I Pet. 4. 15.

These things being premised, that which doth hence

arife as a Conclusion, is,

#### OBSERVATION.

That the following zealously that which is Good, is a

likely means to prevent Harms.

This is not unlike that Speech in the Prophet Isa. (33. 15, 16.) He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of Oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of Bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of Bloud, and soutteth his eyes from feeing Evil; He shall dwell on high, his place of defence Mall

shall be the munitions of Rocks: Bread shall be given him, his Waters shall be sure. So Psal. 37. 27. Depart from Evil, and doe Good, and dwell for evermore. Many more such Sayings of Holy Scripture might be produced; but we shall manage our Business to better purpose, by a distinct declaring,

1. What the Good is that is to be followed.

2. How it is to be followed.

3. What is the Harm that those that follow that which is Good are secured from.

4. From whose Harming the Security is.

5. When it is they are secured.

6. Why those that follow that which is Good are thus secured.

I. For the first, What the Good is that is to be followed: Good things are of many forts. Some things are good rala n, in some respects; rala dozar, in the opinion, esteem, and use of men; which are not so in reality. There be many that fay, Who will shew us any good? Psal. 4. 6. that is, procure us Wealth, Good chear, Corn and Wine and Oyl, mentioned vers. 7. Son, ( faid Abraham to the Rich man, Luk. 16. 25.) remember that thou in thy life-time received ft thy Good things ; that is, he was rich, cloathed in Purple and fine Linen, and fared deliciously, or sumptuously, or lived wantonly, every day. Those were his Good things; not simply so, but in the Conceit of the Possessour. They were not the true Riches, vers. 11. nor that which was indeed his own, verf. 12. but that which he had onely for a while, by permission. As the Quails were given to the Israelites in wrath; as good Pasture serves to fatten Beasts which are fed for the Slaughter: fo are these seeming Good things oftentimes bestowed on Wicked men, but it is to their Ruine at last. Te have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished

Sermon XX. The Good man's Security. 291 rished your hearts as in a day of saughter, saith S. James,

(5.5.)

This Bonum Utile and Jucundum, Profit and Pleafure, carnal and worldly men count their Good things: like him that flattered himself in his Folly, Luk. 12. 19. Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many years; though they were indeed his Poison, the Bait whereby his Soul was caught by Satan, and himself censured

for an egregious Fool.

There is another fort of Good that is really such in genere Entis: and so all God's Creatures are good. God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good, Gen. 1.31. Another in genere Moris, a Good which makes the person truly good. Such is the Goodness of God, who is good, and doeth good, Psal. 119. 68. even by communicating Good to all, Act. 14. 17. And indeed He is the chiefest Good: He is most transcendently, persectly, originally Good; from whom every good and every persect Gift cometh, James 1. 17. And therefore rightly is it said by our Lord Christ, Matth. 19. 17. There is none good but one, that is God. And this Good we are to be Followers of: Be ye Followers of God.

There is also a derivative Goodness from him, which is communicated primitively to his Son, concerning whom it is the Father's pleasure, that in him should all Fulness dwell, Col. 1. 19. The Spirit is given him without measure, Joh. 3. 34. While he was upon Earth, he went about doing good, Act. 10. 38. He might truly say, I am the good Shepherd, Joh. 10. 11. And from him Good is redundant to us. He hath plenitudinem Fontis, and not onely Vasis: With him is the fountain of Life, and in his Light we see light, Psal. 36. 9. Now the Good we are to be Followers of is also this Good which is in and from Christ: the Good of his Word,

Pp 2

to know it; the Good of his Example, to imitate it; the Good of his Gifts, (the Gifts of his Spirit,) to be zealous after them, I Cor. 12. 31. the Good of Righte-ousness and eternall Life which is from God by Jesus Christ, to injoy it; the Good of God's Favour in Christ, to obtain it; the Good of Communion with the Father

and the Son, to embrace it.

But though these sorts of Good are to be followed. yet that which we are here required more specially to be Followers of, is not so much Bonum Beatitudinis. the Good of Blessedness for our selves, as Bonum Sanditatis, the Good of Holiness, whereby we may be like unto God, be holy as he is holy, I Pet. 1.15, 16. and Bonum Justitia, the Good of Righteousness, towards our felves and others, fuch as may confift with a good Conscience, and a good Conversation in Christ; the Good of Innocency, that we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, Phil. 2. 15. the Good of Benevolence and Beneficence, willing and procuring good unto all, Gal. 6. 10. as we have opportunity, doing good to all, especially unto them that are of the houshold of Faith. We must endeavour after the good Heart, that may out of its Treasure bring forth good things, Matth. 12.35. after the good Tongue, that speaketh Wisedom, and talketh of Judgment, Psal. 37.30. that uttereth that which is good to the use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace to the hearers, Eph. 4. 29. after the good Hand, that may work the thing that is good, that it may have to give to him that needeth, v. 28. In summe, we must labour to become Vessels unto bonour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared to every good work, 2 Tim. 2. 21. created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Eph. 2. 10.

filled

1. Univerfally; all the Kinds of it are to be purfued: not onely the Good of Religion towards God, but also of Love towards Man. The End of our Deliverance from the hands of our Enemies is, that we might serve God in Holiness and Righteonsness before him all the days of our life; as it is in the Benedictus, Luk. I. 74, 75. The Grace of God bath appeared to all men, teaching them, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts. they should live righteously, soberly and godly in this pre-sent world, Tit. 2. 11, 12. We know it is S. James his determination, (2.10.) Who soever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Vertues are chained together, the Law is copulative: Bonum non nise ex integra causa; He that is not intirely good, is not good at all. He that is all for the practice of Religious Ordinances, but no whit for Charity; he that is devout at Church, but proud, vain, wanton, uncharitable, unrighteous, intemperate at home; is no Follower of that which is Good, but an Hypocrite, a meer Pharisee, or painted Sepulchre. And he that is much for Alms, and Abstinence from Excess, or prohibited Pleasures, yet careless of Prayer, Reading, Hearing God's Word, in publick and in private, is a profane person; be he never so much esteemed by men, yet is he abominable before God.

2. Nor must we be Followers of all Sorts of Good onely, but also of all kinds of Good in the most eminent Degree. What the Apostle prays for in the behalf of the Colossians, Col. 1. 9, 10. should be the aim of every sincere Christian, that he may be filled with the knowledge of God's Will in all wisedom and spiritual understanding; that he may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being faithfull in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. So what he prays for in behalf of the Philippians, Phil. 1. 11. that he may be

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filled with the Fruits of Righteonsness, which are by 7efus Christ unto the glory and praise of God: that he may be abundant in the work of the Lord, I Cor. 15.58. As he is unjust that lets not the Buier have his full Measure: so is he that doth not afford God the utmost of his Service, that doth not love him with all his Mind, with

all his Soul, and with all his Strength.

In this an Emulation is good, which is implied in the word (nawla), as some Copies have it in my Text; and it is so rendred by Beza. We should vie one with another, as desirous to outstrip each other; like Runners in a Race, that strive who shall run fastest. Yea, in this it is good to be fingular. If ye salute your Brethren onely, faith Christ, ( Matth. 5.47. ) what singular thing, or more then others, doe ye? intimating, that a Christian that exceeds not a Philosopher or a few, is not worthy of that name. He must not onely doe good to them that love him, but even to them that hate him, vers. 44. Though we own no Popish Evangelical Counsels, no Monkish Vows, as putting a man into a state of Perfection, no Merit or Works of Supererogation: yet he that will approve himself to God must endeavour to doe those Good works that are commanded to the utmost, Extensive, Works of all Kinds, and Intensive, in all their Degrees, according to his ability.

3. And this we are to doe fincerely, as before God; not as pleasing Men, but God that trieth the heart, I Thess. 2.4. Not like the Pharisees, who gave Alms, Fasted, Prayed, that they might be seen of Men, and therefore did all with Ostentation; but in secret and private as well as in publick we should be Followers of that which is Good, looking onely at God's Glory, our Obedience to him, and the pleasing of him, as our End. Infomuch that, if we can acquit our felves so as to have his Favour and good Liking of us, we must not

care what we lose, or what Obloquy, Censure, or Difgrace we incurre from men. Our Righteonsness and Holiness should not be in shew, but in truth, Eph. 4. 24.

4. In Following of that which is Good, we should doe it zealously, with our Minds, our Affections, and our Studies. We should give all diligence and study that we may abound in Faith, Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Brotherly love, Charity, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7. We should follow Peace with all men, and Holiness, Heb. 12. 14. pursue after it, as Hunters after a Prey, or Enemies after Enemies. This one thing I doe; (saith the Apostle, Phil. 3. 13, 14.) forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press, or pursue, towards the Mark, for the price of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. A lazy slack Following of Good is ineffectual: such a Seeking as the old Saints are said to have used is that which is required of them that will inherit the Promises, Heb. 6. 11, 12.

5. Yea, we should not onely follow that which is Good our selves, but animate others to follow it too. He loves not God, nor his Brother, that seeing him in Want, doth not relieve him when it is in his power: so neither doth he follow God, that seeing his Brother erre, doth not, as he hath opportunity, endeavour to convert him from the Errour of his ways; that doth not lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, Heb, 12. 12. that doth not avoid giving such Offence as may cause the Lame to fall in the way, or to turn out of it; that doth not encourage others in that which is Good, comfort and heal the forrowfull Spirit, and lead others by Example, Instruction, and Prayer. Such as are of God, doe good, even as he doeth, who benefits all, invites all, is Bonum universale, an universal com-

municative Good.

6. Our following of Good must be with Constancy. We must always be zealous in a good thing, Gal. 4. 18. all our days, in youth and age; in all Companies, in all Estates, on all Occasions: not by fits and starts. We must cleave to that which is good, Rom. 12.9. as a Wise adheres to her Husband, as Ruth did to her Mother-in-law. We should be stedsast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; as knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Which brings me to the other Particulars propounded to be considered: in which I shall be very brief.

III. The Harm that they who are zealous Followers of

that which is Good are secured from.

This is indeed all forts of Evils: the chief whereof are the Wounds of Conscience, and the Wrath of Cod. While men follow that which is Good, they are not obnoxious to those Lashes of a guilty Conscience, which are confequent upon the remembrance of lewd Pranks in youth, Deceits and Covetous practices in age, cruel Murthers, horrid Perjuries, unjust Bribes, Purloining, Stealing, and fuch other Evils as do vastare Conscientiam, violently torture the Mind, and are as scorching Heat in a man's Bones, Gall and Wormwood in his Belly; as when God wrote bitter things against Job, and made him possess the Sins of his youth. These Tortures were resembled in the Poets by the Affrightments of Furies, and are Forerunners of Hell-Torments. Nor shall those who follow what is Good be liable to the Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, which God inflicts on them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Rom. 2.8, 9. These are indeed the grand Harms, that are like the stinging of a Scorpion: but my Text intends likewise all Afflictions incident to us from mens Injuriousness and Malignity, fuch as are Reproaches, Derision, Slanders, priprivation of Liberty, Livelihood, Life: which thoughthey be but Flea-bitings in comparison of the other, yet are they very harmfull, as being extreme trouble-some and grievous. Yet by Following of that which is Good, there is Security from them, if not altogether, at least in a great measure; if not from the Feeling of them, yet from the Oppression of them; if not from the Buzzing and Disquieting of them, as of Flies, yet from the Sting of them, as of Scorpions; if not from the Molestation of them, yet from the Deadliness of them: which will be better discerned, if we consider our next Particular.

IV. Who they are from whose Harming they are se-

They are either Men, or Devils; neither of whom can mortally and eternally wound us. Fear not them ( faith our Lord ) that can kill the Body, and when they have done that, can doe no more: but fear him that can cast both Soul and Body into Hell-fire, Matth. 10. 28. Luk. 12. 4. Men and Devils may interrupt our Peace, but cannot damn our Souls. Neither Tribulation, nor Distress, nor Persecution, nor Famine, nor Nakedness, nor Peril, nor Sword, neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, can separate them that follow that which is Good from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But in all these things they are more then Conquerours through him that hath loved them: as S. Paul faith of himself, Rom. 8. 35, 37, 38, 39. Yet are they forely affaulted by both these Enemies: insomuch that the Apostle tells us there, vers. 36. for God's fake they are killed all the day long, and are counted as Sheep for the flaughter. They are as Sheep among Wolves, who are ready to worry them. Satan casts some into Prison ten; days.

Mars, that they may be tried, Rev. 12. 10. He goes about. like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, I Pet. 5. 8. There is a spitefull Spirit in all that are of the Wicked one ; yet fometimes God restrains the remainder of their Wrath. He cuts off the Spirit of Princes, be is terrible to the Kings of the earth, Pfal. 76. 10, 12. He rebukes an Abimelech in a Dream, fo as that he dares not touch them, Gen. 20.6. He suffers no man to doe them wrong; he reproves Kings for their fake, faying, Touch not mine Anointed, and doe my Prophets no barm, Pfal. 105. 14, 15. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at peace with him, Prov. 16. 7. Sometimes the Luster of a Good life doth either attract the favourable Aspect, or dazzle the Eyes of those with whom they live. Sometimes the benefit of Laws and Government secures their Peace: they are Ministers to them for good, Rom. 13. 4. By these and many more means are they that follow that which is Good indemnified; whenas his own Iniquities take the Wicked himself, and he is holden with the Chords of his Sins, Prov. 5. 22.

V. When it is that they are secured.

But then this is not perpetually so; it falleth out sometimes otherwise. When the Wicked beareth rule, in Times of Anarchy or Tyranny, there is not this Security to them that follow Good, but the people mourn. There is a Just man that perisheth in his Righteousness, and there is a Wicked man that prolongeth his life in his Wickedness, Eccles. 7. 15. When cedunt Armis Toge, men of the long Robe are awed by men of the long Sword, the people are hurried up and down by popular Oratours, Demagogues sway with them, and they controll their Governours; when an Usurper gets into the Throne, and, to strengthen his Party, suppressent the best and wifest; when thundring Cannons are heard.

heath, and just Laws are filened; when the Magnituate's Sword submits to the Souldier's, the Judges yield to the Commanders of forces; when the Preachers lead the People, not by the Word of God, but by the Ordinances of Men; then it is likely, in such an Iron Age, (wherein non Hospes ab Hospite tutus,) to follow that which is Good may be a man's greatest Danger, to speak truth may be his Ruine. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves, Prov. 28. 28. Bene qui lutuit, bene vixit: He is the wisest that lives most retired.

The like may be faid of Times of Perfecution, when God will have his people to be under fiery Trialls, that their Faith and Patience may appear; when God will be glorified in their Sufferings, as well as honoured by their Doings. Yet in these cases, he keeps them in perfeet Peace whose Mind is stayed on God, because they trust in him, Isa. 26. 3. While they hold Faith and a good Conscience, and make no shipwreck of them, the Peace of God, which paffeth all understanding, gnards their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Hic Murus abeneus. Yea, even in time of universal Loss, in such Sufferings as 70b's, they find an bundred-fold advantage with Persecution, and in the end everlasting Life: 10 that they who kill the Body, hasten the Salvation of their Souls; and by dispatching them hence, they speed them in their flight to Heaven. Of which yet they are not the proper Cause; but there is an higher Cause who is able to bring Good out of Evil. Which was the last thing to be considered.

VI. Why they are thus secured.

It is God's Eye and his Hand that do fecure and indemnific those that are Followers of that which is Good. This Reason of their Security the Coherence of my Text with the words next before yields me: for having said, The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteons,

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and his Ears are open unto their Prayers: but the Face of the Lord is against them that doe Evil; he subjoyes my Text, And who is he that will (I had rather say, shall) harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?

While you are in his Service, God counts himself engaged to take you into his Protection. And therefore he will either change the Hearts of your Adversaries. that they shall not mind the harming of you; as he promised the Israelites, Exod. 34. 24. that no man should defire their Land, when they should goe up to appear before the Lord thrice in the year; though then were (in the eve of Reason) a fit season for them to make an hostile and successfull Invasion: or else he will divert them, as he did Saul, I Sam. 23. 28. or disable them, as he did Pharaoh: or if they be permitted to harm you outwardly, God will comfort you inwardly; and in fine, all things shall work together for good to those that love God, and are Followers of that which is Good. And thus they shall be as the Three Children in the midst of the fiery Furnace, and yet have no Harm. And in this respect the Conclusion is made good, None doth, none will, or none shall harm them that are Followers of that which is Good.

#### APPLICATION.

1. This may be a good Encouragement to you all, to follow that which is Good; to exercife your selves, as S. Paul did, Act. 24. 16. to have always a Conscience void of offence towards God and towards Men. At all times, specially in troublous Times, every man is busie in projecting and contriving how to find an Assum or Sanctuary, where he may be safe from Danger, and find Shelter from the Enemy and Avenger. One fortifies his House: another strengthens himself by Alliances: another

another arms himself, and gets into the field: another relies on the Favour of the Grandees in Court, or Army, or City: another gets together what Gold or Silver he can, to procure his Peace at home, or provide for Subsistence abroad. But, alas! all these are but vain Contrivances. Sometimes, yea very often, that which men trust upon is but as a broken Reed, which, if a man lean upon it, will run into his hand. Those very things which he thinks to find Protection by, become his Ruine; and that which he devised to be his Wel-

fare, becomes a Trap to him.

Nor is it any marvel if Woe befalls men, when they take Counsell, but not of God; and cover with a Covering, but not of his Spirit, that they may adde Sin to Sin, ( as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 30. 1.) The best way is, to sow in Righteousness, and then we shall reap in Mercy; to follow that which is Good, and then we shall be kept from that which doth harm. If our Innocency defend us not from mens Attempts against us; yet the Faithfulness and Truth of God shall be our Shield and Buckler. Men might live better under the Protection of Laws and Government, were it not for their contentious Spirits and unruly Tongues. Did every one study to be quiet, and to doe his own business; did they not render Evil to any man, but ever follow that which is Good, both among themselves, and to all men, as S. Paul admonisheth, I Thess. 4. 11. and 5. 15. they might live more fafely, and die more happily.

Were men contented with their own, did they defraud none, but apply themselves to works of Righteousness and Mercy; they might enjoy themselves and God with more freedom. Did they not seek to climbe ambitiously, or hunt after Vain-glory, did they lay up their Treasure in Heaven; they should have Rixa multo minus Invidiaque, fare better here, and speed better hereaster.

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Oh that you would fericully bethink your felves, and apply your Endeavours to doe that which may fave you from the Condemnation of your own Conference, the Sting of Death, and the Damnation of Hell: and learn to commit the keeping of your Souls in well-

doing unto God, as unto a faithfull Creatour.

2. Nevertheless, I would not have you to neglect lawfull Means for your Sasety. Christ would have his Disciples wise as Serpents, though innocent as Doves, Matth. 10. 16. Faith and Prayer exclude not honest Prudence. Integrity is not always sufficient to ward off the Blows of malicious Accusers. False Witnesses stone Naboth, and Envy crucifieth Christ. S. Paul is not blamed for Appealing to Cesar, or making use of the Difference between the Sadducees and Pharisees; nor for discovering of the Conspiracy to kill him; nor for escaping, by being let down in a Basket, from Damascus: though he would not bribe Felix, nor remit any whit of his Profession.

A person may be over-wise and over-righteous, and so destroy himself; as it is Eccles. 7. 16. Therefore run to the Name of the Lord as thy strong Tower, and sollow that which is Good: but withall take Solomon's Counsell, Prov. 27. 12. A prudent man foreseeth the Evil, and hideth himself. If God shut there up in Streights, so as there is no escaping; learn what follows my Text, vers. 14, 15. be sure to suffer for Righteonsness sake: and then be not afraid of their Terrour, neither be troubled; but sanctifie the Lord God in your Hearts.

Brethren, it pleaseth the Lord still to continue our Fears upon us: the Angel of God still draws his Sword, and cuts down many; the Sword of the Enemy is held over our head, and we know not but that an overflowing Stream of Bloud may reach even to us. No marvel, while the Fogs of Sin are in our Consciences, if an

Earth-

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Earthquake of Trembling is in our Hearts. It is a fign that we are not Followers of that which is Good, because God raiseth up against us so many Evils.

It is time then that we should turn unto him that smiteth us, and that we should seek the Lord of Hoasts; that, while we go against our Enemies, we should keep our selves from every Evil thing; lest the Anger of God be not turned away, but his hand be stretched out still. Could we cease to doe evil, and learn to doe well, we need not fear either God's Rod, or Mens Rage. Till then, we can expect no withdrawing of either. Oh then be so wise as to avoid Sin, if you would prevent Harm. Arm your selves with all the Armour of God, above all the Shield of Faith, that God may be your Sun and Shield. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE

THE

# WAY OF LIFE DISCOVERED.

Part I.

# The Twenty-first SERMON.

### PSAL. XVI. II.

Thou wilt shew me the Path of life. In thy Prefence is fulness of Joy, at thy right hand there are Pleasures for evermore.

HESE words are the Close of a Psalm, which is thus entituled, Michtam of David, that is, A golden Psalm of David, or David's Jewel, or notable Song. Cethem is fine glittering Gold; from whence this word Michtam may be derived, for a golden Jewel, and so note the Excellency of this Psalm. The like Title is before other Psalms, viz. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. Nor is the Title unsit for the Matter, or unbeseeming the Authour. The Matter being most precious, containing that Gold tried in the fire, which Christ gives, and with it enricheth his Church to all Eternity; that Aurum potabile that cures and preserves Life for

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ever. Congruous to David's Spirit, who was a man of much Acquaintance with God, and of Heavenly Meditations.

But that may be demanded concerning this Pfalm, which the Ennuch asked of Philip, Act. 8.34. Of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? There are that conceive this Pfalm wholly meant of Christ, and not of David: others, that part is meant of Christ onely, and not of David: others, that all is meant of both: others, that part is meant of David onely, and not of Christ at all. I will not interpose in this matter.

It is sufficient for my present purpose, that S. Paul, Act. 13.35, 36, 37. makes the tenth verse of this Psalm proper to Christ; and S. Peter, Act. 2. 25, 26, 27, 28. makes the four last verses thereof to be a Prediction of Christ's Resurrection, not applicable to David, who faw Corruption, as his Sepulcher then remaining witnessed. Now of those my Text is cited as a part; and therefore it may be safely interpreted as the Speech of Christ in an Address to God his Father, in which he opened his very Heart, declaring the Reason why he was not moved by that Tempest and terrible Storm of Evils that he was to feel; how he was kept from finking, notwithstanding those Flouds and Waves that were to goe over his head; why he despaired not in that great Earthquake, that threw the Temple of his Body to the ground: to wit, Because he set the Lord, or foresaw the Lord, always before him, or before his face; that he was at or on his right hand, that he should not be moved: Therefore did his Heart rejoyce, and his Glory, or Tongue, was glad; his Flesh should rest, or dwell con fidently, in hope : he being by Faith affured. that his Father would not leave his Soul in Hell, in the place or state of the Dead, though he descended into

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it, nor suffer, or give, his Holy one (so dear to him) to see Corruption; but had made known to him the ways of Life, or would shew to him the path of Life, in raising him up to Life; and that he would make him full of foy with his Countenance, as S. Peter reads it, or, as it is in our Version, (according to the Hebrew,) that in his presence was fulness of Joy, at his right hand there were Pleasures for evermore. Word for word, it may be rendred, Thou wilt make me know the way of Life, Satiety of Joys before thy face, Pleasures at thy right hand to perpetuity. In which sense the words are to the same effect with what the Authour to the Hebrews speaks, (12. 2.) Looking to Jesus, the Authour and Finisher of our Faith, who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at

the right hand of the Throne of God.

And thus secondarily these words might be David's, and every Holy Believer's, in a qualified sense, as being affured of Restitution from Hell, of freedom from Corruption of their Flesh, of finding the Path of Life, of Satiety of Joy with God, and Perpetuity of Pleafures at his right hand, in like manner as Christ found in his Refurrection; they being quickened together with him, raised up together, and made to sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2. 5, 6. and thereby animated, under all Perfecutions and Sufferings, to perfift in their Adherence to their God unmovably, as being affured of Christ's Resurrection, and thereby of their own; of his being in Fulness of Joys in God's presence, and so of their own being; of his being at the right hand of God with Pleasures which endure for ever, and consequently that it shall be so with them. Of which we have a most admirable Example in Holy Job, who, though under extreme Pains of Body and Anguish of Spirit, yet thus expresseth himself, Job 19. 23, 24,

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23, 24, 25, 26, 27. Oh that my words were now written, Oh that they were printed in a Book; that they were graven with an iron Pen and Lead in the Rock for ever. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body; yet in my Flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; though my Reins be consumed within me. And thus joyntly of the Head and Members, Christ and every Believer, is my Text verified, and rightly understood; and accordingly I shall apply it.

Therein is declared the Assurance which Christ had, and every Believer (together with him, and by reason

of his Union with him) hath of three things.

1. That God will show them the Path of Life.

2. That in his Presence there remains to them the Fulness of Joys.

3. That at his right hand they shall have Pleasures

for evermore.

Of these in their order, with what Utterance the Almighty shall vouchsafe me: though the Argument be such, as neither the Minds of Men or Angels can comprehend, nor their Tongues express.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That Christ and Believers are assured of having the Path of Life made known to them.

For the distinct handling hereof, we are to consider, I. What Life it is, the Path of which both are assured of having made known to them.

2. What is the Path of this Life, or what are the

Ways of this Life.

3. How God hath and will make them known, or shew them.
4. Why

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4. Why he did affure Christ, and why he doth affure Believers thereof.

I. What Life it is, the Path of which they are affured

shall be made known to them.

Life is the manner of Living things existing, and is the Excellency of their Beings, whereby things animate differ from things inanimate. Of Life there are fundry degrees or kinds made by Philosophers. 1. Vegetative, in Plants, and things which being rooted in the Earth fuck their Nourishment from it, and so grow thereby, and yield Fruit, and Seed to propagate their Kind. 2. Sensitive, in those living things that move and have Sense more or less, though they perceive onely such things as concern their Sustenance and Self-preservation; but can neither discern Spiritualls or Universalls, nor reflect on their own Actions, nor discourse as Man: though some of them have admirable Sagacity, as Experience hath shewed in Elephants and divers other Animals. 3. Rationall, in a Man, whereby he is enabled not onely to know what concerns his Food and Neceffaries to uphold his Corporall Being; but is also capable of Counfell and Instruction in things pertaining to his Obedience to his Creatour, and Peace with him, and Comfort in his well-doing. 4. There is yet an higher Life, to wit, that of Angels, who need no Food to fustain their Being, nor Members to move them, but are of a fubtile, active and intelligent Nature; yet much short of the Father of Spirits, with whom is the Fountain of Life, (as it is said Pfal. 36.9.) who hath: all Fulness of Life in him, not capable either of diminution or privation; and is the universall Cause of all Life in other Beings, which he imparts to all living things in that way and measure as he thinks best to appertain to them.

Now the Life of Men or Angels may note the bare

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Duration or Existence of their Being: and so the Devils live, and the Souls of the Damned have Life; and the uncleanest Sodomites, while they walk up and down on Earth, have Life, though in a morall sense they are dead while alive: they have also in some things a bene esse, or well-being, to wit, in respect of such things as pertain to Nature, or outward Condition among men; as Abraham said to the Rich man in Hell, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy

good things, Luk. 16. 25.

But this is not the Life, the Path, which Christ and his Members affure themselves God would make known to them; though it be not excluded: for doubtless David affured himself, and therein rejoyced, that God would uphold his Soul in Life, deliver his Soul from Death, his Eyes from Tears, and his Feet from Falling; that he should walk before the Lord in the Land of the living: as he speaks Pfal. 116.8, 9. And Christ understood by the Life which he expected from his Father, that he would bring his Soul and Body together again, and restore that Life he lost by Death. And the Saints believe and expect the Resurrection of their Bodies from the Grave: and in the expectation and affurance hereof, they endure the greatest Tortures that Tyrants can inflict on them: as it is faid Heb. 11. 35. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.

But this Refurrection to Life is not the mere Conjunction of Soul and Body together; for that may be onely the Resurrection of Damnation, (as our Saviour speaks Joh. 5. 29.) which befalls them that have done Evil, and is there opposed to the Resurrection of Life, which they onely that have done Good shall be partakers of. The Resurrection of Damnation, though it

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be with Restitution of the Being those Wretches had before they died, so as that they shall come out of the Graves, hear the voice of the Son of man, and in a sort live, stand before the Tribunal of Christ, and hear their Sentence, and so continue in their Being everlastingly; yet it is not termed Life, but Death, or the Second Death, it being to a Copartnership with the Devil and his Angels, with whom they are sentenced to be in Torments, as they were guided and ruled by them

while they converfed with men on Earth.

But the Life which the Scripture vouchfafes to term Life indeed, as being the onely Vita vitalis, the lively Life, is that which is with God, and according to God, termed therefore the Life of God, Ephel. 4. 18. God being their God, therefore they live to God, who is the God of the living; as our Saviour's expression is, Luk. 20. 38. they live and reign with Christ, as it is Revel. 20. 4. It is an holy and happy Life, and therefore simply termed Life by way of excellency, in oppofition to Hell-fire, Mark 9.45. If thy Foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into Life halting, then having two feet, to be cast into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. Vers. 47. it is termed the Kingdom of God; And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one Eye, then having two Eyes, to be cast into Hellfire. It is by our Saviour often called Eternall Life, of which the Regenerate Believers have the beginning here, they have it inchoate, with a Right to it. Verily, verily, I say unto you, (saith our Saviour, 70h. 5. 24.) He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that fent me, bath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death to Life. 1 Job. 2.14. We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because me love the Brethren: he that loveth not his Brother, abideth.

abideth in Death. I Joh. 5. II, I2. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal Life: and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life: and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life. Joh. 3.36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. But Jus in re, or the Consummation and full Possession of this Life, is after the Resurrection, in the World to come: which therefore Christ by way of Excellency terms eternall Life, Mark 10.30.

And this is that Life, in the affurance whereof Christ laid down his Life with so much quietness, when he commended his Spirit into the hands of his Father, Luk. 23. 46. And apon the promise of Life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 1. 1. not onely of the Life that now is, but also of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. S. Paul did both labour and suffer Reproach, vers. 10. In hope of this eternall Life, Tit. 1. 2. he exposed himself to daily danger of Death, which he terms dying daily, 1 Cor. 15. 31. as being sensible, (as he saith vers. 19.) if in this life onely he and other Christians had hope in Christ,

they were of all men most miserable.

Now in hope and affurance of this Life Christ (duram serviit Servitutem) underwent the hardest Service that ever was undertaken; he emptied himself, took upon him the form of a Servant, was made in the likeness of Men, and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the death of the Cross, Phil. 2. 7, 8. Though the Cup he was to drink of were a very bitter Cup, a Cup of deadly Wine, such as had in it the Dregs of God's Anger, and was mingled with the Sins of men, (for whom God made him Sin, or a Sacrifice for Sin;) yet he drank it off, yielding to his Father's Will, as knowing it to be true which

Sermon XXI. The Way of Life discovered. 313

which he himself taught the two Disciples, that Christ must suffer these things, and rise from the dead the third

day, and so enter into his Glory, Luk. 24. 26, 46.

And the Promise of this Life animated all the Holy Apostles, Martyrs and Saints, in their severall Generations, to give all diligence, to deny themselves, to take up their Cross, and so to follow Christ even to Death, not counting their own Lives dear to them, but being zealous to doe and fuffer for Christ, though with the Loss of all; as having learned, that who soever will save his Life shall lose it, and who soever will lose his Life for Christ's Sake Shall find it, Matth. 16. 25. What things were gain to me, faith S. Paul, (Phil. 3.7, 8, 9, 10, 11.) those I have counted Loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I do count all things but Loss, for the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, for whom I have suffered the Loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; that I may know him, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his Sufferings, being made conformable unto his Death; if by any means I might attain unto the Resurrection of the dead. Which occasions them to feek the Path of this Life, which is the next thing enquired into, and is now to be confidered.

II. What is the Path, or what the Ways of this Life. The Ways or Path of Life is a Metaphor taken from Travellers, who have a certain Track in which they are to tread, and by going in which they are guided to the place to which their Journey tends, and by its direction are ascertained of coming thither, if they hold on their Motion. Here in this passage it can be taken for no other then the Means of assurance of their attaining this Life. Which in respect of Christ are,

1. On God's part, the Engagement of his Father to him, Isa. 53. 10, 11. that when he should make his Soul

an Offering for Sin, he should see his Seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand: He should see of the travail of his Soul, and be satisfied. Christ undertook the great Business of doing his Father's Will, which was written in the volume of his Book, by offering that Body which his Father had prepared him, upon a Contract between them when he came into the world; as it is described Heb. 10.5. 7, 8. And this was, that he should so lay down his Life, as to take it up again; as Christ himself declareth, Joh. 10. 18. I have power to lay down my Life, and to take it up again: this Commandment have I received of my Father. Which thing made it impossible that he should be holden of the pains of death, Act. 2. 24. And therefore it is faid, He fore faw the Lord always before his face, as being on his right hand, that he should not be moved with the fear of Death, vers. 25. being firmly affured by his Father's Covenant, (upon which he put himself on that great Expedition of Coming into the world to fave Sinners, by the offering of himfelf,) that he should not lose by his Adventure, but should after his Sufferings enter into his Glory. To which is to be adjoyned the Love that his Father bare to him for this reason, as he expresseth it Job. 10. 15, 17, 18. As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my Life for the Sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my felf. This unparallel'd Dutifulness of Christ to his Father, in yielding to freely to his Self-exinanition and Humiliation unto Death, did obtain a fingular Love from his Father to him, and engage his Truth and Power to revive and superexalt him.

2. On Christ's part, his ready Obedience to his Father's Will was the Path to Life: which therefore he allegeth Sermon XXI. The Way of Life discovered. 315

allegeth in that Prayer of his wherein he opened his Bosome to his Father, Joh. 17. 4, 5. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work thou gavest me to doe: And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.

In respect of Believers, the Path of Life to them is,

1. On God's part, the free Love of God in chuling them to Life; termed the writing their Names in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, Rev. 17. 8. which (because they are given to Christ) is said to be the Lamb's Book of life, Rev. 21. 27. and our Saviour tells them, their names are written in Heaven, Luk. 10. 20. Hereby is Christ engaged to give Life to them, as he himself testisieth, Joh. 6. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath fent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And accordingly he saith, Job. 17.2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternall Life to as many as thou hast given him. Hereby it is that Christ is become the Path of Life to them; as at several times he declares. 70h. 14.6. Jesus saith unto Thomas, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh to the Father but by me. Joh. 11.25. Fesus said unto Martha, I am the Resurrection and the Life.

And indeed Christ is the Way of Life,

I. As he is the Exemplary Cause of it. All whom his Father thath foreknown, being predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many Brethren, Rom. 8. 29. Wherefore Christ told his Disciples, Joh. 14. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also. The Life of Christ, which he recovered by his Resurrection, is the efficacious Pattern or Copy according to which God hath contrived our Life. He

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is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. For since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ skall all be made alive, I Cor. 15.

20, 21, 22.

Hence the Apostle tells us, Col. 3. 3. that we are dead, and our Life is hid with Christ in God; it is deposited as a Treasure in Christ's hand, who is the Trustee, to whom our Life is conveyed ad opus & usum nostrum, for our use and behoof, (as the Lawyers use to speak:) he hath Livery and Seisin given of Life on our behalf, and so his Life is the Pledge and Path of our Life.

2. As Christ is the Way of our Life as he is our Pattern, Depositary and Pledge; so is he the Way of our Life as the procuring Cause thereof: He is the Prince of Life, Act. 3. 15. the Cause or Authour of eternall

Salvation, Heb. 5. 9. and that many ways.

First, by his Preaching: which moved S. Peter to say, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternall Life, Joh. 6. 68. The words, saith Christ, that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life, vers. 63. The Preaching of the Law was but the Ministration of Death, of the Letter, that killed, 2 Cor. 3. 6, 7. but the word of the Gospel is the word of Life, Phil. 2. 16.

Secondly, by his Death: for to he tells us Joh. 6. 51. I am the living Bread, which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the world. And indeed it was for this very cause, that, as the Children were partakers of slesh and bloud, so he also took part of the same; that by Death he might destroy him that had the power of Death, to wit, the Devill; and deliver them that through fear of Death were all their Life subject to bondage, Heb. 2.

14, 15. As by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all men to Condemnation: even so by the Righteousness of one, (better rendred, by one Righteous deed, to wit, his Obedience unto Death,) the free Gift came upon all men unto Sanctification of life. That as Sin hath reigned unto Death; so might Grace reign through Righteousness unto eternall Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 5. 18, 21. His Death procures our Life, both removendo Prohibens, by taking away the Sting of Death, Sin, disarming Satan of his Power; and by meritoriously purchasing our Life, by paying a Price for us.

Thirdly, by his Resurrection, whereby he becomes as the First-struits, that sanctifies the rest of the Lump, and so obtains Resurrection and Life for those that are Christ's. As also he is impowered to give Life upon his Resurrection; as himself saith, All Power is given to me in Heaven and in Earth, Matth. 28.18: As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will, Joh. 5.21. Hereupon the Apostle argues thus, Rom. 5.10. For if when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life.

Fourthly, by his Ascension, whereby he is become an High Priest, not on Earth, but such as is set down on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, Heb. 8. 1. He is not as the Priests of the Law, who were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but continueth for ever, and hash an unchangeable Priesthood, or a Priesthood that passeth not from one to another, being made, not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the power of an endless or indissoluble Life: and therefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, or evermore, that come unto God by him; S s 2

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7. 16, 23, 24, 25.

Fifthly, He is the Prince of Life, or Cause of our Life, by shedding forth his Spirit after his being glorified, which was as Rivers of living water, as his own words import, Joh. 7. 38, 39. This Gift of the Spirit of Christ is that whereby we are born again to a Spiritual Life. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, faith Christ, Joh. 3. 6. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing, Joh. 6. 63. Neither indeed had Christ's Preaching or his Dying availed to bring us to Life, had he not given us of his Spirit. And therefore herein was the Prerogative of the Gospel above the Law, that whereas that gave the Command, but could not give the Spirit, being a dead Letter; by the Ministration of the Spirit (or, the Law of the Spirit of life, Rom. 8. 2.) Christians are made alive, 2 Cor. 3. 6. The Gospel is become the Ministration of Righteonsness, vers. 9. If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of Sin; but the Spirit is Life, because of Righteonsness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortall bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, Rom. 8. 10, 11.

Sixthly, Christ's Appearing shall consummate the Life of a Believer. Though he now be dead in Appearance to the World, to their Rites, Practices, Hopes, Injoyments, and his Life is now onely hid with Christ in God; yet when Christ, who is his Life, shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in Glory: as the Apo-

stle speaks most comfortably, Col. 3. 3, 4.

2. On our part, the Path of Life is,

I. In our Union to Christ, which is by Faith, whereby he is our Head, and we are his Members, and therefore partakers of his Life. I live, (saith the Apostle,

Gal.

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Gal. 2. 20.) yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the Life that I now live in the slesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Joh. 11. 25, 26. He that believeth on me, although he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. The Life of a Christian is conjoyned with Christ's, as that of a Child with the Mother's.

2. In our Conformity to Christ: 1. In Dying with him, and that, First, to the World. If ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to Ordinances? Col. 2. 20. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the World is crucified to me, and I unto the World, Gal. 6. 14. Secondly, to Sin. Rom. 6. 6, 7, 8. Knowing this, that our Old man is crucified with him, that the body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin. For he that is dead is freed from Sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live with him. Thirdly, by Suffering with him. It is a faithfull faying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we Shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. If so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together, Rom. 8. 17. 2. In his Refurrection: and that, First, by walking in Newness of Life. Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the Glory of his Father; even so we also should walk in Newness of Life; and thereby be planted together in the likeness of his Resurrection, Rom. 6. 4, 5. Secondly, by living to God. As Christ, in that he liveth, liveth unto God: fo those that have put on Christ, reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through fefus Christ our Lord: they yield themselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead; and their Members as instruments of Righteonsness

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ness unto God, Rom. 6. 10, 11, 13. Thirdly, in seeking the things above as their Treasure: as the Apostle inferrs, Col. 3. 1, 2. If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth. I have insisted the longer on this Point, (of the Path of Life,) because it is the main thing that concerns us to know.

III. How God makes known or shews this Path of Life

to them.

This Question is not hard to be resolved from that which hath been already said. God shewed Christ the Path of Life, 1. By his Promise to him, mentioned before, at his coming into the world: 2. By his Providence; he made it known experimentally to him, when he was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father.

To us he makes known the Ways of Life, I. By his Son's Appearing, and his Gospel, who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to life, through the Gospell, 2 Tim. 1. 10. 2. By his Spirit which he gives, whereby we are assured, that through it, mortifying the deeds of the Body, we shall live, Rom. 8. 13. We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12.

IV. Why God doth shew them this Path of Life.

The Reason of God's making known the Way of Life to Christ and to us is one and the same; That as thereby Christ was to be strengthened in all his Temptations, in all his Sufferings, animated in all his Obedience to his Father's Will, by having an eye to the Life which was propounded to him: so should all the Disciples of Christ be confirmed in all their Sufferings, encouraged in all their Actings for Christ, by their Assurance

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furance of Life with Christ; that they may live by Faith, and not be of them who draw back unto Perdition, but of them that believe to the faving of the Soul, Heb. 10. 38, 39. That, with Moses, they may chuse rather to Suffer Afflictions with the people of God, then to injoy the pleasures of Sin for a season: esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches then the Treasures in Egypt, as having respect unto the recompence of the Reward, Heb. II. 25, 26. Wherefore Christ assures Believers, in his Epistle to the Church of Ephesus, Rev. 2. 7. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. To the Church of Smyrna, vers. 10, 11. Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life: He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second Death. To the Church of Sardis, Rev. 3. 5. He that overcometh, I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life.

#### APPLICATION.

I may say now with Moses, Deut. 30. 15, 19. See, I have set before you this day Life and Good, Death and Evill. Chuse therefore Life, and take hold of the Paths of it. Life is a thing naturally desired. It is true, in extreme Anguish, men chuse Strangling rather then Life. In his Fits of sore Pain, Job was in such a mood, as to desire Death most earnestly, and to abhor Life. Yet simply, every living thing would fain live, it struggles and strives what it can to keep Life: men spare no cost to continue it, though it be but for a while, and that not without a mixture of Sorrow and Trouble, to which the best Life on Earth is obnoxious. Life, we say, is sweet: nor is the Devil taken for a Liar in this, when he saith, Skin for Skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his Life, Job 2. 4. But, alas! this Life is

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too much prized; and that is the reason why a greater Death is consequent upon the immoderate affecting of it: because they would still live here, many die for

ever in Hell.

That Life, the Way of which was shewed to Christ. and now to you, is indeed worthy your knowing, worthy your embracing and pursuing. It is a holy Life, a happy Life, a safe Life, an eternall Life. If you live in Christ, you shall live with Christ: if you live in the Spirit, you shall be quickened by the Spirit: if you live the Life of God, you shall live in his Presence. In a word, if you walk in the Paths of Life, which I have this day shewed you, you shall live, not the Life of Men onely, but of holy Angels; you shall live a Life as far beyond the Life of Kings, as Heaven is above the Earth. The Life of the best and happiest Kings hath been attended with much Care and many Dangers: nor is any Prince's Life-time so splendid, but that the Day is sometimes darkened over him, and Storms beat on him, and perhaps his Sun fets in a Cloud. 'Tis otherwise to be conceived of this Life; when once attained, it is never darkened, never eclipfed, never ended.

Oh that you would then learn to die with Christ, to Sin, to the World; to live by the Faith of the Son of God; to be conformed to him, by putting on the same mind that was in Christ; to live to God; to doe, not your own will, but the will of your Father which is in Heaven; to commit your Souls in well-doing, when you suffer for him, as to a faithfull Creatour. Is the Loss of Credit, Goods, Peace, Liberty, Life, terrible to you? Why, the Life propounded to you will sweeten all. Death it self (though the King of Terrours) is to them that are in Christ as a Serpent without a Sting, which you may handle without Danger, without Fear:

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it will but (as the Poets feign of Medea's Medicaments)

let out your old Bloud, and beget new Life.

When I consider the voluptuous and worldly Life of most, it pities me to think, that Men, made to live like Angels, should chuse to live more Pecudum, a Life not higher then the Life of Beasts: that those who are made for God, for Christ, for Heaven, to live there, should terminate their Thoughts, Affections, Endeavours, on things on Earth, on Money, gay Cloathing, Mirth, Riot, Pomp, State, Favour of men, Vain-glory, and such like momentany things, which must pass away, and likely lead men to Hell, and end in a Life with Devils.

Oh follow Christ, I beseech you. If you value your Souls, cast them not away on Trisles. Learn the Path that Christ chose to Life: follow him, and you shall live with him. Let, I beseech you, the serious Warning of Christ, Matth. 7. 13, 14. take impression on you: Enter ye in at the streight Gate; for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which goe in thereat. But streight is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and sew there be that find it. Let your drowzy spirits heed S. Paul's monitory Alarm, Eph. 5. 14. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee Life. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

And the state of t

LAUS DEO.

## GOD's PRESENCE,

# Fulness of Joy.

Part II.

### The Twenty-fecond SER MON.

#### P S A L. XVI. II.

In thy Presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy right band there are Pleasures for evermore.

HIS Psalm is a Golden Psalm of David, and the words which I have read to you make the Close of it: which whether they are meant of Christ, or of David, or both, and so are applicable to Christ and his Members, hath been formerly considered. In reference to both the First Proposition in them hath been already handled; and therein the Encouragement which Christ had, and all Believers have, in their Sufferings, by God's shewing them the way of Life, hath (though much short of what so precious an Argument deserved) been somewhat unfolded to you.

That which is yet farther to be infifted on, is the latter part of the Verse: in which, I told you, are con-

tained two more Observations.

Tt 3

2. That

2. That in God's Presence there is Fulness of Joy, or, Satiety of Joys before his Face, to Christ and all Believers.

3. That at his right hand they shall have Pleasures for evermore, or, Pleasures at his right hand to perpetuity.

This latter S. Peter omits in his Citation of this Scripture, Ad. 2. 25, &c. Yet it is not improbable but he alludes to it vers. 33. where he useth these words, Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted: and that the Holy Ghost intended it for a Prediction of Christ's Ascension and Sitting at the right hand of God; and so it is applicable both to Christ's Exaltation, and our sitting together with Christ in heavenly places; of which S. Paul

speaks Eph. 2. 6.

But the former is expresly mentioned, with some little difference in the Reading, Thou shalt fill, replenish, or make me full of Joy, or Gladness, with thy Countenance, Face, or Presence. And it is alleged, as being the Cordial that strengthned and restored the Spirits of Christ in his Agony at his Death; which is intimated in that speech of the Authour to the Hebrews, (12. 2.) Looking unto fesus, the Authour and Finisher of our Faith, who for the foy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God: which shews, that both in the Garden and on the Cross our Saviour had his Eye on the Toy that was set before him, as the Prop and Basis that did support him in those extreme Passions and heavy Burthers, which no other Shoulders but his could bear, fo as not to fink under their pressure. And S. Peter tells us, ( I Epist. 1. 11. ) That the Prophets searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signifie, when it testissed before-hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow, or the Glories after them. Which shews that the Prophets did testifie before-hand, together with the Sufferings of Christ,

Christ, the Glories after them: which no doubt was done in Isa. 53. Psal. 22. and in many other places: of which number I question not but these words of my Text are, by S. Peter's alleging them Ast. 2. 28.

My II. OBSERVATION I shall consider in these Four Propositions.

1. That there are Joys in God's Presence, or, with his Face, or Countenance.

2. That there is a Fulness in these foys.

3. That these Joys in their Plenitude, or Fulness, belong to Christ, and those who believe on him to eter-

nal Life.

4. That the Assurance and Expectation of these Joys was the grand Encouragement and Support of Christ in his Obedience active and passive, and is so still to all the Holy Saints, who doe and suffer according to the Will of God.

#### I. PROPOSITION.

That there are Joys in God's Presence, or, with his

Face, or Countenance.

The same is in other words taught us Psal. 36. 9. For with thee is the Fountain of Life: in thy Light (that is, in the Light of thy Countenance) we shall see Light, that is, Joy and Gladness; according as it is explicated Psal. 97. II. Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Opright in heart. To like purpose is that passage Psal. 30. 5. In his Favour is Life: Weeping may endure for a night, or in the evening; but Joy cometh in the morning. Though in the Night-time or Evening, when the black Veil of Death covers their Faces, there is Sadness and Weeping even to the Righteous; yet Joy comes in the Morning of the Resurrection, when

the Sun of Righteousness shall appear with Healing in his wings, Mal. 4. 2. and they shall see the Face of God.

The better to conceive this, we must consider, I. What Joy is: 2. What Joys are in the Presence of God:

3. And from what Cause or Motive they come.

I. What foy is.

Joy is that Affection of the Soul, whereby it embraceth some present or future Good. For there is a Rejoycing in Hope, ( as the Apostle speaks Rom. 12. 12.) Abraham rejoyced to see Christ's day; and he saw it, and was glad, Joh. 8. 56. Now of all Affections this is the sweetest to a man's self, as Love is the sweetest to others. Joy is that which chears the Spirits, enlargeth the Heart, which is shrivell'd up and contracted, like a Purse, by Grief and Fear. It makes the Countenance lightsome, the Feet and other Members lively and nimble; furthers the Concoction of our Meat, makes our Sleep, which refresheth the body, sweet to us. And therefore Joy is most sutable to the Will of man, and, if the Mind be in its right wits, is always defired.

Now Joys are of several forts, according to the variety of the Objects, Motives and Means of Rejoycing. There are Objects of Joy within us, and without us; matters carnal or spiritual, temporal or eternal, present or future; from faith or fight, hoping or feeling; natural, and acquired; longer or shorter in duration: which make our Joys either more pure or mixed, greater or lesser, with great difference in degrees upon variation of Circumstances, different apprehensions of the Object, and the Good that accrues by it; either comparatively with the precedent Evil felt or feared. or absolutely, as the thing is good in it self and its own nature, or in respect of our Interest in it good to us.

Should I here make a Philosophical discourse of this Affection, and exhibit to you a Scheme of the feveral kinds, degrees, properties and effects of this one Affec tion, I might spend more then an hour upon this Subject. But I pass to the next Head.

II. What Joys are in the Presence of God.

Those Joys are the best which spring from the embracing of the best and most lasting Good, with least Defectiveness, and greatest Latitude. And such are the Joys that are in the Presence of God, or, with his Face and Countenance. For therein there is, 1. a perfect Freedom from all Evil; 2. an entire Enjoyment of all

Good in its Purity and Resplendency.

1. The Evils a man is delivered from do much enhaunse his Joys. He that is delivered from Dangers and Fears doth rejoyce: and the Joy is the more, if the Dangers were great and apparent, the Fears of Evil imminent and oppressing; still more, when the Evils have been felt, and that with much Anguish and long Continuance. How do men rejoyce, when they have overthrown their Adversary in a Law-suit, in which if they had been cast, they had been undone in their Estates? How do men rejoyce, when they have overcome their Enemies in Battel, to whom if they had been Captives, they had been led into Exile from their own Country? How do Slaves rejoyce, when they are redeemed from Turkish Bondage, and, in stead of rowing in their Gallies, are returned to live with their own Masters in their own Families? How do Prisoners condemned to the Gallows rejoyce, when the King fends them a Pardon, and they escape the hands of the Executioner?

These Deliverances do cause much Joy and Exultation in men, and sometimes much Glorying; though perhaps they be not long free from the Fear and Danger of their Evils, but, in the Change of Fortune, fall into the same or greater Mischiefs: or if they escape

them, yet their Victory, Pardon, or Redemption, though it bring them Liberty, perhaps reduces them to Poverty and a low estate. And, which is worst, although they overcome their Adversary on Earth, yet the Devil their Adversary prevails against them; though they get the Victory against their other Enemies, yet they are led captive by their own Lusts which fight against their Souls; though they be without Wounds by a Sword in their Bodies, yet they have sore Wounds in their Consciences by their Sins; though they be pardoned by the King, yet they are condemned by the King of Kings; though they are redeemed from Turks, yet not from Hell. And sure a Holy heart that prospers in the one, and not in the other, finds his Joys damped so, as that he can scarce think those Deliveran-

ces worth the rejoycing in.

A Holy heart rejoyceth indeed with hearty Jov. when he prevails against his Adversary the Devil and his Temptations; when he is cured of the Wounds of his Spirit; when he hath gotten power over that Body of death that makes him cry out, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from it? They are the Desertions of God, the Domineering of his Corruption, the Absence of God's Spirit, his Decay in Prayer, his Doubts of his Interest in God's Grace, his Backslidings. Inconstancy in good, and such like Spiritual Evils, that do most annoy him, eclipse his Joys, beget in him Lipothymies, Fainting fits, cold Sweats, Trembling of Heart, Fearfulness and Dejection of Spirit. These break his Bones, envenome his Spirits, make him loathsome to himself, as a man whose Wounds stink and are corrupt. And therefore there is no Joy to fuch an one. till he have the Joy of Salvation from God; till in the multitude of the thoughts of his Heart, the Comforts of God refresh his Soul 5 till he finds the Presence of God accepting

accepting him; till he firds that God prepares his Heart to Prayer, and then inclines his Ear to hear; till God speaks Peace to him, sprinkles the Bloud of Christ on his Conscience, and frees him from his Fear of God's Wrath and Condemnation; till there be a Messenger, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto him his Righteousness; till God be gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the Pit, I have found a ransome; till he pray unto God, and he be favourable unto him, and he see his Face with Joy: as Elihu speaks, Job 33. 23, 24, 26. He is not till then free from

Anguish of Spirit and Anxiety of Soul.

In the day of my Trouble, faith Asaph, (Psal. 77. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9.) I Sought the Lord: my Sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my Soul refused to be comforted. I remembred God, and was troubled: I complained, and my Spirit was overwhelmed. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? doth his Promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger Shut up his tender Mercies? Thus mournfully also speaks Heman the Ezrabite, Pfal. 88.3, 6, 7. My Soul is full of Troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the Grave. Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy Wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. And then expostulates, vers. 14, dec. Lord, why castest thou off my Soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted, and ready to die: while I suffer thy Terrours, I am distracted. Thy fierce Wrath goeth over me, thy Terrours have cut me off. They come round about me daily like water, they compassed me about together.

Such Complaints are frequent in the Psalms, Job, and Hezekiah's Song. In the Penitentials of Holy men, (in the Relation of the Lives of Godly persons of tender

Consciences, Men and Women, of former and later days,) we meet with such Apprehensions of their Sins, dangers of Temptations, want of God's Spirit, hiding of his Fase, as benight their Souls, take away their Joys, fill them with Pensiveness, Horrour, and Fear of Divine Vengeance, of Hell-sire, of Apparitions of Devils, that they can neither feed pleasantly in the day, nor rest quietly in the night, but look ghastly with dejected Countenances, and goe mourning, in the bitter-

ness of their Spirit, all their days.

But when these Clouds are scattered, this Darkness taken away, fo as that they can fay with that Martyr, He is come, He is come; [Glover, in Queen Mary's days, burnt at Coventry; when they can discern the Light of God's Countenance shining upon them, can see him reconciled in Christ, can hear the voice of Christ speaking to them, Son, be of good chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee; when they find the Spirit enabling them to pour out their Souls before the Lord; when their Souls can fend this Challenge to the Gates of Hell, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? it is Christ that died, or rather is risen again, who also sitteth at the right hand of God, making Intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the Love of God? Then there is rejoycing indeed, then they rejoyce with Joy unspeakable and full of glory, I Pet. 1.8. Though they be in much Affliction, they can fing in the Fire, and clap their hands at the Stake; in a poor Cottage, in a Prison, they can be as merry as if they were in a stately Palace: for then they are delivered from their greatest Enemies, and their greatest Fears.

Now the Joys that are in the Presence of God are for Deliverance from these Evils, from all of them, bodily and spiritual; from unrighteous Sentences of men, violent

violent Captivity, forcible restraint of Liberty, Sickness, Losses, Sorrows, Death; and, which is more, from all Corruptions within, Temptations to Sin from without, from the Malice of men, the Power of Satan, the Hiding of God's Countenance, the Absence of his Spirit, the Fear of Hell. They that are with God, in his Presence, doe as the Children of Israel did, when they faw the Egyptians dead on the Sea-shore, they triumphantly glory in their Deliverance: they fing at it were a new Song before the Throne: they fing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, with the Harps of God, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints, Rev. 15. v. 3. There they, with the greatest glorying and magnanimity of Spirit, take up the speech of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, that giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Joysthat Believers have in God's Presence are not onely because of Freedom from all the Evils which in their life-time did annoy them, but also by reason of the entire injoyment of all Good in its Purity and Refplendency. Many things there are which men rejoyce in on Earth: and if but in one fingle Excellency they find themselves goe beyond others, how do they glory in it, as if others were not to be named the same day with them? Some rejoyce in their Descent and Parentage; as Pharaoh, I am the son of the wife, the son of ancient Kings, Ifa. 19. 11. Some in their Beauty; as Abfalom, that gloried in his unblemished Body and goodly Head of hair. Some in their Wisedom and Skill their Riches and Prosperity; as the King of Tyrus, that had his Heart lifted up, and said, I am a God, I sit in Vv3 the

the Seat of God, in the midst of the Seas. Behold, thon art wiser then Daniel; there is no Secret that they can hide from thee. With thy Wisedom and with thy Understanding thou hast gotten thee Riches, and hast gotten Gold and Silver into thy Treasures; and thine Heart is lifted up because of thy Riches, Ezek. 28. 2,3,4,5. Some in their Honours; as Haman did in King Ahasurus his promoting him, Esther 5. 11. Some in their Righteousness; as the Pharisee that boasted he was not as other men are, nor as the Publican, Luk. 18. 11. Yea, some can rejoyce in their unsociable, Cynical, sowr, austere Deportment, though it be but a Delusion, if they conceive Holiness in it; as Monks, Anchorets, Quakers,

and fuch like, have done, and doe at this day.

All these, and many more things, the Hearts of men can rejoyce in, though they be some of them but vain things, some but petty good things; yea, if they were enjoyed in their Confluence, as Solomon enjoyed them, ( who had Wealth, and Wisedom, and Beauty, and Dominion, and what-ever the carnal Heart of man affeets; and yet, after his ample experience of the Sweetness of them, gives this account of them, Eccles. 1.2. Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity, yea Vexation of Spirit) they produce but a forced Mirth, Sardonium Risum, notwithstanding which, in the midst of Laughter the Heart is forrowfull, and the end of their Mirth is Heaviness. As it was with Belshazzar, Dan. 5. 6. He was in his Royall Palace at Babylon, caroufing in gold and filver, with his Wives and Concubines, praifing his Gods; when on a sudden, upon a Hand's writing on the Wall, the King's Countenance was changed, and his Thoughts troubled him so, that the Joynts of his Loins were loosed, and his Knees smote one against another.

That which is worth rejoycing at indeed, as begetting a permanent and genuine Joy, sutable to the Spirit

Chrift,

of a man, is his Acquaintance with God, his Knowledge of him, God's Adopting him to an Inheritance with him, his Relation to the Son of God, the Habitation of his Blessed Spirit in him, the Holiness of his Heart, the Beauty that is in the hidden man of the Heart, which is in the fight of God of great Price; the hearing of his Prayers, the accepting of his Works, the glorifying of his God, the Love of his Saviour. In these things are the Joys of the Saints. So faith S. Paul, We are they that rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3.3. God forbid that I should rejoyce in any thing fave in the Cross of our Lord fesus Christ, whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World, faith the same S. Paul, Gal. 6. 14. Many there be that say, Who will shew us any Good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put Gladness in my heart, more then in the time that their Corn and their Wine increased, saith David, Psal. 4. 6, 7. And again, I have rejoyced in the way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches, Pfal. 119. 14. These things do indeed beget the most solid Joys, which enlighten the Eyes, and chear the Heart under many Wants, many Dangers, many Persecutions, many Expectations of future Evils.

And yet these Joys are eclipsed to the most Holy man. Sometimes by his own Sins, and the Withdrawing of God's Spirit from him; as the case was with David. Sometimes by reason of Calamities, and the sinful Practices of his Children; as it was also with him. Sometimes from his Doubting of his own spiritual Estate, from the want of such Feeling as once he had of the Esticacy of God's Grace in his Heart, by the Motions of it to holy Exercises, to Prayer, Praising God, and heavenly Meditations; in the quieting of his Spirit, by remembrance of God's Covenant of Grace in

Christ, the Love of Christ in giving himself for him; in the assurance of his Perseverance to the end, and the knowledge of his Integrity. Yea, Holy persons do often go mourning all their days, charging themselves with Hypocrisie, with Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, with Apostasie, condemning themselves as Reprobates, uncapable of Pardon, destitute of all Grace, and so no better then Fire-brands of Hell; and this even while they pray for Pardon, repent of Sin, are of so tender Consciences, that they fear to sin against God, and would rather die a thousand Deaths then once

fpeak the least evil of Christ or God.

If none of these Clouds do darken the Joys of Holy men here; yet there are other things which do, and will certainly, while they are on Earth, much diminish them. The Sins which they see committed by others are no small Vexation to Holy men. Just Lot was vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Wicked: for, dwelling among the Sodomites, in hearing and seeing, he tormented his righteous Soul from day to day with their unlawfull deeds, 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. The Sufferings of the Saints are no small Affliction to their Fellow-members. If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; as if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it, I Cor. 12. 26. Much more are their Sins. The incestuous Corinthian's finfull taking his Father's Wife, was matter of Mourning to the whole Church. So the Schisms in that Church, the Disorders in their Assemblies, their Yielding to communicate with Idolaters in their Idolatries, their going to Law one with another before Infidels, and not composing their Differences between themselves, were matter of Affliction to S. Paul. I fear, faith he, (2 Cor. 12. 20, 21.) lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would; lest my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned ned already, and have not repented of the Uncleanness and Fornication and Lasciviousness which they have committed.

The Ignorance, Unteachableness, Unfruitfulness of his Hearers, much more their falling away into Errours and scandalous Practices, is no small Grief to a Godly Pastour; which makes him walk heavily, and complain to God, serving him with many Tears and Temptations.

Yea, the deferring of a Christian's Hope makes his Heart sick; he is weary with waiting, so that he cries, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Our selves, which have the First-fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves grown within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our bodies, Rom. 8. 23. In this we grown earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from Heaven. For we that are in this Tabernacle do grown, being burthened; not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life. Being consident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 8.

But they that are in the Presence of God have all Good. They have the most high Descent, as being born of God: the most perfect Beauty in Soul, having the Image of God perfectly restored; and at the Refurrection their Bodies fashioned like unto the glorious Body of Christ. They become fully Rich, being made Heirs of God, Joynt-heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17. When they have overcome, they shall inherit all things: God will be their God, and they shall be his Sons, Rev. 21. 7. They have advancement to Honour and Greatness. To him that overcometh, faith our Saviour, (Rev.3. 21. ) will I grant to sit with me in my Throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his I will Xx Throne.

I will not fay that the Bleffed Saints and Angels that stand in God's Presence are omniscient: They know not the Secrets of Mens hearts, much less the secret Counsels of God, whose Ways are unsearchable, and whose Paths past finding out. That Conceit of some of the Papists, about the (Speculum Trinitatis,) the Glass of the Trinity, as if by seeing God, they could see all things in him, (according to that faying of Gregory, Videt omnia qui videt Videntem omnia,) is most false: though some of them make use of it, to excuse their abominable Invocation of Saints deceafed, whom they absurdly and foolishly pray to for all sorts of Good things, though they know neither them nor their Neceflities, much less their Hearts. But I may safely say with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13.9, 10, 12. Now we know in part, and we prophesie in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a Glass darkly, or in a Riddle; but then face to face : now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known. The Beatifical Vision of God will perfect our Holiness and Wisedom so far, as to free us from all Errour and Folly, which now do miferably mislead us; from all Ignorance, which now doth fadly perplex us: it will enlighten us with that Knowledge, which will be sufficient to glorifie our God, and fatisfie our felves. As the Light of Heaven exceeds the Light of the Sun: so the Light of the Soul in those that are with God exceeds all the Light that was in Adam by Creation; in Moses, S. John, S. Paul, or any other of the most inlightned Saints on Earth, by Revelation.

In a word, there is no kind of Good, which is meet for a created Being and an adopted Child of God to have, but it is conferred on those Holy persons that are in the Presence of God; which makes their Joys unspeaunspeakable and full of Glory. But they are still more sweetned from the consideration of the Fountain whence they slow: which is next to be considered.

III. What is the Cause and Motive from whence these

Good things, these foys, do proceed.

And that is the Love and Purpose of God, which is immutable. Ointment and Perfumes rejoyce the Heart : so doth the sweetness of a man's Friend by hearty Counfell, faith Solomon, Prov. 27.9. The Love and hearty Welcome that a man meets with, makes the Feast the more pleasant. Eat not thou the Bread of him that bath an evil Eye, neither desire thou his dainty Meats. For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The Morfell which thou hast eaten thou shalt vomit up, and lose thy sweet words, Prov. 23. 6, 7, 8. Oftentimes men are invited to a great Feast, but it is not out of Love, but for fome fordid Ends, to engage them in something which they will find cause after to repent of; it is not with True-heartedness: which makes many sad at Feasts, as fearing an After-reckoning. Joseph's Brethren, when they fate at meat with him, marvelled one at another, Gen. 42. 33. not well knowing whereto that Invitation tended. When men believe they are welcome indeed, and that they are feafted in Love, they feed heartily, and are merry, without any Check in themselves, or fear of After-repentance. It is so with them that feast in Heaven; that are called to the Supper of the Lamb; that eat and drink in his Kingdom; that partake of that Feast full of fat things, a Feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined, Ifa. 25. 6. that partake of the Delicacies of Heaven, of the Riches and costly Entertainment there: they know they are heartily welcome to Heaven; that they are not invited as Esther invited Ha-X x 2 man

man to her Banquet, to betray him, but that they are in God's Presence out of the purest Love, out of the most sincere Motive, their Faithfulness to him, their Sufferings for him; and to the most desirable End, the mutual Solace and Content of each in other: God hath not any intent to make a farther Triall of them, as of Adam in Paradise; but to put an end to their Sufferings and hard Service, that they may keep an everlassing Sabbath with him in Glory.

I have shewed you in some Adumbration those things which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of man to conceive, even the things God hath prepared for them that love him, I Cor. 2.9. Whereby I have given you a little Taste of those love, the Fulness of which in God's Presence I should

now infift on, which was my

#### II. PROPOSITION.

That there is a Fulness in these foys.

This might be demonstrated by the Kinds of them, they being not onely bodily, but Spiritual; not mixt, but pure; not in a less, but a most intense degree; not for a short time, but for ever. But this may perhaps be declared more fully in the handling of the III. OBSERVATION, That at God's right hand there are Pleasures for evermore.

#### III. PROPOSITION.

That these Joys in God's Presence, in their Plenitude or Fulness, as they belong to Christ, so also to all true Believers.

This is deducible from our Lord Christ's words, Joh. 16. 20, 21, 22. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep

weep and lament, but the World shall rejoyce; and ye shall be forrowfull, but your Sorrow shall be turned into for. A woman when the is in travail bath Sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the Child. the remembreth no more the Anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have Sorrow: but I will see you again, and your Heart shall rejoyce, and your foy no man taketh from you. Whereupon the Apostle saith, I fob. 3.2. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The same condition of Joy and Glory, though in an inferiour degree, shall be to the adopted Sons of God, as is to the onely-begotten Son of God: and it is God's righteous Judgment, that they which fow in Tears should reap in for. Plal. 126. 5.

#### IV. PROPOSITION.

That the Assurance of these Joys set before Christ was the grand Support and Encouragement of him in his Obedience active and passive, and is so still to all the Holy Saints, who doe and suffer according to the Will of God.

As concerning Christ, it is expressly delivered, Heb. 12. 2. that for the Joy set before him he endured the Cross, despising the Shame. And that it is so to all the Servants of Christ, is frequently told us. Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoyce in the hope of the Glory of God. And not onely so, but we glory in Tribulation also. 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. For which canse we faint not; but though our Outward man perish, yet the Inward man is renewed day by day. For our light Affliction.

tion, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory; While we look not at the things that are seen, but the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are Temporal; but the things which are not seen are Eternal.

#### APPLICATION.

I do but cursorily pass over these Points, that I may make some Application to your use: and that shall be,

1. To refute the Censures of Carnal men, who count the Course of the Righteous to be Madness, and his End without Honour; and therefore have him in Derision, and as a Proverb of Reproach: as it was observed long agoe in the Book of Wisedom, Chap. 5.3, 4. They can discern no Joys in the humble penitent Believers, either at present or for the future. They are no whit acquainted with the Joy of the Holy Ghoft, nor the Comforts of Christ, nor the Fulness of Joy that is in the Presence of God: and for this cause imagine the mortified Christian to be but a melancholick man, that foolishly pines away himself, not injoying that Mirth and that Benefit of fuch things as are allowed to the fons of men. therefore if they find a person to be of a wounded Spirit, of a troubled Conscience; if through Weakness a perfon of a tender Conscience be pensive, afflicted with the sense of Sin, and perplexed in Spirit; they impute it to Religion, to hearing of Sermons, and performing other holy Duties: while they themselves think there is nothing better then to be merry while they may; to eut and drink, for to morrow they shall die. Come on, fay they, let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the Creatures like as in youth. Let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments: and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us. Let us crown our Selves

selves with Rose-buds before they be withered. Let none of us goe without his part of our Jollity; let us leave tokens of our Joyfulness in every place: for this is our Portion, and our Lot is this, Wised. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. Come ye, say they, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill our selves with strong Drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and

much more abundant, Isa. 56. 12.

But sure, sober Infidels have taken such Speeches to be rather the Speeches of Brutes then of Men. Who can conceive that Man, that hath an immortal Spirit breathed into him from the Father of Spirits, should have no higher Joys then sensual Delights? that he should be satisfied with such Contents as are onely from Sublunary things? If the Philosophers knew that Vertue of it self could give such Tranquillity of mind, fuch ample Content, as that they could discern the Joys of Senfualists to be but the Foolery of besotted men; Christians may discern that the Joys of Philosophers, in their dim Light of Reason and Morall honesty, together with their glorying in their Idols, could be but as Moon-light, compared to the Sun, and their Joys in Christ. In God's Favour and Presence are the real Joys; though obscured from the World by the mean Condition upon Earth of those that possess them.

2. Oh then, you who have heard what Joys there are in God, be persuaded to quicken and comfort your selves by them. Let not the Scoffs or Censures of the prosane Carnalist affright you from your Choice. Place your Hope in the pursuance of those Joys that are Spiritual, that are Heavenly. David, Moses, S. Paul, and He who was the wisest of men, (our Lord Christ,) slighted all the Contents on Earth, and patiently underwent all Afflictions, all the Reproaches and Persecutions of men, that they might attain the Fulness of Joys in God's Presence. Surely, should all your days on

Earth

Earth be spent with never so much Mirth, yet you would be great Losers, should you lose the Joys of Heaven. Yea, the want of the Peace of Conscience. and Joy in the Spirit, on Earth, will so damp the Joys of the most Atheistical Voluptuaries on Earth, that they will find them to be far short of that Sweetness they imagine in them, and in the end to be as Gall and Wormwood in their Bowells. On the other fide, the Joys of Christ and Christians in present fruition, and future hope, will countervail all those bitter Potions they drink here, and fill them with endless and unmeafurable Satisfaction hereafter. Let then the Joy of the Lord be your strength, Nehem. 8. 10. your Encouragement to follow all the Holy ones of God, chiefly our Lord Christ, running with patience the Race set before you, and looking unto Jesus the Authour and Finisher of vour Faith. Amen.

#### LAUS DEO.

MAN'S

# MAN'S Guide to Glory.

The Twenty-third SER MON.

P s A L. lxxiij. 24.
Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsell, and afterwards receive me to Glory.

E have in this Pfalm (whether composed by, or for Asaph to fing) a Skirmish between the Flesh and the Spirit, with the Victory of the Spirit, thereby strengthened to stand for God, and to adhere to his Party. The Combat arose from the Quarrel that humane Reason had against Divine Providence, as either unequall, or impotent, in that the Wicked prospered in the world, when the Godly as poor Abjects were depressed and trampled upon by the Nimrods of the Earth: As if this did argue, either that God was ignorant of humane Affairs, that he faw not through the thick Clouds; that (according to the Epicurean Fancy) he followed his Pleasure in Heaven. and let things below run at randome, leaving them to Chance: or that he would not or could not remedy fuch Irregularities, as fell out in the Government of this lower World.

To

ceive me to Glory.

In which words the Pfalmist expresseth the Foundation of his future Happiness: as in the Verse before he declares the Cause of his present Standing, notwithstanding the Storm of Temptation that was upon him; upon what Bottom he secures his Soul, notwithstanding fuch Onsets and Perills of wandering out of his way to Blessedness. For attaining of which Felicity, he ascribes nothing to a fansied Light within him, or power of Free will; but to that special efficacious Grace, which is preventing and fustaining, that worketh in God's people both to will and to doe of his good pleafure, Phil. 2. 13. His Tuition and his Guidance is the entire and onely Cause of a Saint's affured Beatitude. And this the Authour of the Pfalm doth acknowledge, whilft he expresses the sense he had of his own nearness to Ruine, (when, as it is vers. 2. he found that, as for him, his Feet were almost gone, his Steps had well-nigh slipt) had not God been with him continually, and held him by the right hand, guided him with his Counsell, and led him to Glory. From whence these Observations offer themselves.

I. That when God leaves a person to his own Counsell, it is a Forerunner of his Perdition.

2. That it is the Safety of God's Servants, that they

are guided by his Counsell.

3. That those whom God guides by his Counsell, he doth bring to Glory.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That when God leaves a person to his own Counsell, it

is a Forerunner of his Perdition.

That which is faid Pfal. 81.12. that God gave the people of Ifrael up unto their own hearts Luft, and they walked in their own Counfells; and therefore he did not subdue their Enemies, nor turn his hand against their Adversaries, vers. 14. doth sufficiently intimate, that the Cause of their wasting and spoiling by their Enemies was God's leaving them to their own Hearts Lusts, and their walking in their own Counsells.

The like Speech we have in the New Testament, in that Sermon which was made by S. Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, when, to take them off from their intention of sacrificing to themselves, they told them of the Evil of their doings, and of the pernicious Consequence of their practices in sacrificing to them that were but Vanities; and how that God in times past suffered all Na-

tions to walk in their own Ways.

Which Passages do evince, that the reason why both Jews and Gentiles were under Sin, all the World were become guilty before God, all had sinned, and came short of the Glory of God, Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. were under Wrath and Condemnation, was because they were lest to their own Counsells. For in that case, as it is Rom. 1. 18. they held the Truth in Unrighteousness: vers. 22. prosessing themselves wise, they became fools. Wherefore Y y 2

God also gave them up to Uncleanness, through the Lusts of their own Hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more then the Creatour, who is bleffed for ever, Amen, vers. 24, 25. For this cause God gave them up unto vile Affections. And even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to doe those things which are not convenient, vers. 26, 28. which brought upon them the Judgment of God. And to like purpose is that Prediction, (which is upon cogent reason conceived to be verified in the Roman Apostasie) 2 Theff. 2. 10, 11, 12. Because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be faved; for this cause God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lie: That they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.

And it is indeed just with God, that they who for-fake him should be forsaken by him; which must of necessity be their Downsall: for mens own Counsells are but as rotten Posts, which if they be shaken, the House will fall of it self. All the Thoughts and Devices of man are but vain; even the Wisedom of the world is Foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own Crastiness; and again, The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of the wise, that they are vain, I Cor. 3. 19, 20. It is with Men as with Sheep that wander from their Pasture and Shepherd, they are caught and made a Prey to Wolves and Foxes: so those who leave God's Counsell, and chuse their own Ways, are easily beguiled and enslaved by Satan to their Destruc-

to their own Countells For aftici chief at the inoit

yea,

#### II. OBSERVATION.

It is the Safety of God's Servants, that they are guided

by his Counsell.

There is a twofold Counfell of God. The first is that Counsell by which he guides himself: of which the Apostle speaketh Ephes. 1. 11. that God worketh all things after the Counsell of his own Will; and of which the Pfalmist saith, Pfal. 33. 10, 11. that The Lord bringeth the Counsell of the Heathen to nought; he maketh the Devices of the people of none effect: The Counsell of the Lord standeth for ever; the Thoughts of his Heart to all generations. And this Counfell of God is ofttimes contrary to Man's, and clean different from Man's Imaginations. For though there are many Denices in man's heart; nevertheless the Counsell of the Lord that shall fand, Prov. 19, 21.

Hereby he afferts his own Singularity, Independency, and Sovereign Dominion: as Isa. 46. 9, 10. Remem ber the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My Counsell shall

stand, and I will doe all my Pleasure.

This is not that Counfell of God by which he guides his Servants to Glory; this being the Secret which belongs onely to the Lord. But it is the Thing revealed which belongs to us, that we may hear it and doe it; it is this Counsell of God whereby he guides his people, and brings them to Glory. And though it be true, that even this is a Secret in respect of the World, the Great things of God's Law are strange things to them, the Mystery of Godliness is so profound, so confessedly great, as that none of the Princes of the world know it; Y y 2

yea, when it was in Christ opened, it was the hidden Wisedom of God in a mystery, containing such things as Eye had not seen, nor Ear heard, nor had entred into the Heart of man to conceive, even the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: Yet it was ordained by God before the world, to our Glory, and revealed to his people by his Spirit, who have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given them of God: as it is I Cor. 2. 12. This Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.

This is not either an imaginary Light in every man, conceived by deluded Quakers as sufficient to guide them to God: nor is it any peculiar Enthusiasm, such as Fanatick spirits have been deceived by: nor any fuch Dreams and Apparitions as Friers and Monks have themselves been abused by, and miss-led other persons, in times of Ignorance: nor any fuch vain Raptures or Conceits, as those whereby men have been so lifted up, as to despise others as Pygmies in Knowledge in respect of themselves, or to fansie as if they were of God's Privy Councill. But the Counfell of God by which he guides his Servants is his Word, containing his Precepts, his Promises, and what-ever Revelations in Holy Scripture he hath delivered for our learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scripture might have hope: especially the word of the Truth of the Gospell; such as S. Paul meant, Act. 20, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27. when he said to the Ephesians, that he kept nothing back that was profitable to them, but testified to Jews and Greeks Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospell of the Grace of God; so that he was pure from the bloud of all men, in that he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole Counsell Counsell of God. This is that Counsell of God which makes men wise unto Salvation, or brings to Glory. And with this Counsell of his he guides his Servants,

1. By the Preaching of it in the Ministry of the Gospell of Christ, which is the Power of God unto Salvati-

on, Rom. 1. 16.

2. By the Operation of his Spirit; by which they with open face behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Hereby

they have the mind of Christ, I Cor. 2. 16.

To which may be added such speciall Guidance as either by joynt or solitary Prayer, Christian Conserence, Self-examinations, particular Experiments, secret Motions, Illuminations and Warnings, remarkable Providences, God vouchsafes some of his Children in Temptations, against fears of Persecution, attempts of Corrupters, apprehension of Divine Desertion; against all such Scandalls, and other Evils, as become Precipices into which Souls are cast, or Snares and Stumbling-blocks by which they are apt to be overthrown. And by this Counsell of God their Feet are guided into the way of Peace and Safety, and they after brought to Glory. Which is my

#### III. OBSERVATION.

That those whom God guides by his Counsell, he doth

at last bring to Glory.

The Glory which the Psalmist may here mean (especially if David were the Penner of this Psalm) is not unlikely to be the Glory which he expected in being made King of Israel; it being probable that this Psalm was composed in the time of his Persecution under Saul, during which he complained that his Enemies did live

live and were mighty, and they that hated him wrongfully were many in number, Pfal. 38. 19. Yet no doubt he alfo had an eye to the Glory which he expected after this Life. So Pfalm 17. having prayed to the Lord, (vers. 14, 15.) to deliver his Soul from the Wicked, which were his Sword; from the men of this world, which had their portion in this Life, whose bellies God filled with his hid treasures, so as that they were full of Children, and left the rest of their Substance to their Babes: he declares his expectation to be of a higher kind, (vers. 18.) As for me, I will behold thy face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. And this the phrase of receiving him to Glory, after his guiding him by his Counsell, doth most clearly intimate.

And indeed this is the thing which is the grand Expectation of the Saints, That God will not fail to lead them in his Paths for his Name's sake; and so to order their Steps in his Word, that no Iniquity get dominion over them: that the Spirit of God will so quicken them, as they may run the way of his Commandments: that he will enable them to live by Faith in Christ, and there-

by preserve them to his heavenly Kingdom.

It is that exceeding and enduring weight of Glory which is wrought by Afflictions, and the Guidance of Divine Teachings and Providences, that causeth them to look, not at the things which may be seen, which are but temporall, but the things which are unseen and eternall, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. For which reason the same Apostle tells the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14. We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth; Whereunto he called you by our Gospell, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

APPLI-

#### APPLICATION.

For Application hereof; If the Apostle had cause to be thankfull for the Thessalonians, because of God's calling them to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Christ: much more hath each believing Christian cause to be thankfull to God, to rejoyce and take Comfort in this so blessed a Condition, of God's Guidance by his Counsell, so as to bring him to Glory. And since the leaving a man to his own Counsell is the Forerunner of Perdition; how ought he to dread (as a direfull Omen of the most execrable Condition) the being given over to follow his own Counsell, to be carried away by his own Luss, as being a certain sign of God's Desertion,

and exposing of him as a Prey to the Devill?

Wherefore it highly concerns every one who defires his own Salvation, to follow that Admonition Pfal. 2. II. to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling; or, as it is Phil. 2. 12. to work out his Salvation with fear and trembling. When we confider our own Ignorance in the Way which leads to eternall Life, our Folly and Unskilfulness in finding it out, our Negligence in inquiring after it, our Inadvertency to that Teaching and direction which might guide us in it; when we ponder the vanity of humane Reason, our Frailty and Easiness in hearkening to Deceivers, the incessant Diligence and Vigilancy of the old Serpent in perverting us, the impossibility of our attaining to Salvation by our own Wisedom and Strength, and the extreme perill of Erring so as to perish eternally, if we have not God's Guidance: we shall see great cause to fear our selves, find great reason to seek the Guidance of God's Counfell, and to walk always by it, to follow that Light which he hath held forth before

fore us in his Word of Truth, especially by his Son, the Light of the world, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, by whom alone we can goe to the Father, without whom we walk in darkness, and know not whither we goe. Without this Guidance we can doe nothing as we ought, but, as men driven by our Lusts, or seduced by Satan, we are hurried violently, or tamely drawn into those By-paths which lead down to the Chambers

of eternall Death.

Alas! our Temptations, which are many, and with fo much Wiliness laid to infnare us; our Insufficiency to think any thing of our selves as of our selves; the sad Experience we have of the Falls of many most precious Saints; the frequent Complaints of the most mortified Christians, who bemoan their Wretchedness by reason of that Body of Death which still depresseth them; our Childishness in affecting what is most pleasing to Sense, and our little apprehension of our own Necessities; our undervaluing of spirituall Bleffings in heavenly things in Christ; the Prevalency of the Carnall mind in us, which is too often as the Biass that turns us, that inclines our Free will to Earthly things, but is Enmity against God, being not subject to God's Law, neither indeed can it be; All these things, I say, should make us fuspect our selves, and examine our Thoughts and Ways, whether they be according to God's Counfell or not: they should make us consider what Spirit we are of, even in our Religious Duties; how we are acted, not onely in Secular affairs, but also in our exercise of Godliness, even in our Prayers and most zealous Service of God. Solomon's Counfell is very necesfary to be followed, Prov. 3. 5, 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. This

This is the great Stay and Comfort of a self-knowing Christian, that observes himself, his own Weakness, but yet is possessed with the taste of God's Grace, That though he be weak and foolish, yet he is guided by God's Spirit; that he orders the Motions of his life by the Rule of Christ, and still seeks to Heaven, for Light from thence to lead him; that God will guide him with his Counsell, and then bring him to his Glory. Amen.

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# BELIEVER'S SAFETY, PEACE& REST.

# The Twenty-fourth SERMON.

### PSAL. Xl. 8.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, onely makest me dwell in Safety.

HAT was the Occasion of composing this Psalm, is uncertain.) Whether it were after or before his Entrance into his Kingdom, before or after his Victory over Absalom; sure it is, it was made by David when he was in an holy frame of Spirit. And in it he first bespeaks God as a Supplicant, v. 1. then expostulates with his insolent Adversaries for their Malignity towards him, vers. 2. declares his Assurance of Divine Election and Tuition, vers. 3. admonishes them how to rectific themselves, vers. 4, 5. mentions the Study of the generality of men, with his Request for himself, vers. 6. acknowledges the meliority of his Choice, vers. 7. and thereupon infers this Resolution which I have read, I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, &c.

There is no difficulty about the Reading or Meaning of the words: whether we reade, [together, in id ipsum,] as the Vulgar Latin; or [both,] as our Translation:

whether we reade, [Thou, Lord, onely,] (referring to his fingle Help;) or, [Thou, Lord, makest me alone] (though I have no other with me) dwell in Safety, Hope, Consi-

dence, or Security.

This Passage shews his settled Acquiescence in the Tuition of the Almighty, grounded upon his experience and knowledge of his Love and Favour, without any such anxious Thoughtfulness, enseebling Fears, distracting Perplexities, as others in the like Distresses and Destitutions (to those he was in) were wont to be

oppressed with.

It is likely David, when he speaks of his laying himself down in peace, and sleeping, meant it onely of his natural Sleep, and his addressing himself thereto. which sense those words lead us, Psal. 3. 5. where he faith, I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. And probably the Occasion of this Psalm was the same with that of the Third Psam, which he made when he fled from Absalom his Son. And likely enough it might be a magnanimous Reply to the Motion of some of his timorous Servants, ( who perhaps would have had him to have cowardly become a Fugitive, when the Revolt from him was fo great, and every one was ready to shift for himself, ) That his Heart was not so dejected by that Insurrection, but . that he (though he were alone, compassed with ten thousands of people, that set themselves against him round about ) could in Affiance upon Divine Providence, as quietly lie down, and take his Rest on the Ground, as if he were on his Bed in his Palace at Jerusalem; as knowing, that though there were none with him in that condition, yet the Vigilancy of God would be as fufficient for his Safety, as if he had been lodged in his ftrong Castle at Sion.

Yet may the words be extended farther, (with fome

Commentatours, ) to denote the Disposition of believing Souls, in addressing themselves with courage to their Death and Grave. (which is termed a putting off this Tabernacle, 2 Pet. 1. 14. and a Resting in their Beds, Ifa. 57. 2.) through the Affurance which they have, that when their House of this Tabernacle is diffolved, they have a Building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 5.1. And what David faith here of himself, whether concerning his Resolution, or Assurance, each pious Soul, that hath learned to trust in God, may with a like Composedness of spirit and Considence, Fortitude and Magnaminity, take up, and fay, I will both lay me down in peace, and fleep : (either in my Bed or Grave:) for thon, Lord, onely ( without any other Garrison ) makest me alone ( without any other Company ) to dmell in my house ( either on Earth or in the Heavens ) in Safety. Hope and Security; notwithstanding the Power and Plots of my Earthly or Infernal Enemies. And accordingly these Observations are hence deducible.

1. That the safe and secure Dwelling of Believers is

onely from God.

2. That God makes their Habitation safe to them,

though they be alone.

3. That in Assurance hereof, a holy Believer can quietly take his Repose, without oppressing Fears, even in the greatest Dangers.

### I. OBSERVATION.

That the sufe and secure Dwelling of Believers is onely

from God.

In the Prayer of Moses, the Man of God, Psal. 90. 1. he thus acknowledgeth; Lord, thou hast been our Dwelling-place in all generations: intimating, that both in that

that Age in which he was a Stranger in the Land of Madian forty years, when he fled from Pharaoh, as it is in S. Stephen's Oration, Act. 7. 29. when he and the rest of the Children of Israel wandred in the Wilderness forty years more; and also when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another people; God was still a Shelter to them: they dwelt in the Secret place of the Most high. lodged under the Shadow of the Almighty: he covered them with his Feathers, they trusted under his Wings; bis Truth was their Shield and Buckler: he was a Sun and a Shield to them: he suffered no man to doe them wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their sake, Psal. 105. 14. When he found facob in a Desart land, and in the vast howling Wilderness; he led him about, he instructed bim, he kept him as the Apple of his eye. As an Eagle stirreth up her Nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, and beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. As most excellently the Providence of God over Israel is described by Moses in his Divine Poem, Deut. 32. 10, 11, 12.

The like did our Psalmist find in his Persecutions by Saul. When he was fain to fly from Saul's Court to Nob, thence to Keilah, Ziph, the Wilderness of Maon, to Achish King of Gath, to Ziklag; in all these his Removes God told his Flittings, noted his Wandrings in his Book, and put his Tears in his Bottle. He was a Shelter to him, a strong Tower from the Enemy. He aboad in his Tabernacle; made his Refuge under the covert of his Wings. His Faithfulness and Truth was his Defence. And therefore in his gratulatory Song, wherein he commemorates his Deliverances from the hand of all his Enemies, and from the hand of Saul, he thus makes his Vow, Psal. 18.1,2. I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength.

The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust; my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower.

The same Tuition he youchsafed to Daniel and the rest of the Godly Captives, when they were carried away from their own Country into Babylon. There God was (as he promised) a Sanctuary to them: in the Peace of the places where they were Exiles, they had Peace. God's Presence with them was better to them then David's Puissance, then Solomon's Wisedom or He shewed that he had the Hearts of Kings in his hands, and could turn them as the Rivers of maters: that he could make them that carried them away Captives to pity them: that he could cause their Enemies Plots to prove their own Snare; their Contrivance against the Three Children, Daniel, Mordecai, and other Jews, to turn to their own Destruction; the Fire to kill them, that would have burned others; the Lions to tear them, which were to have devoured Daniel; Haman's Gallows, which was prepared for Mordecai, to be his own and his Sons Gibbet; the Decree which was procured to have the Jews destroyed, to be executed on their Adversaries.

Nor did the Apostles and Holy Martyrs find less Shelter and Security in God's Presence with them, in those great Persecutions which the furious and bloudthirsty Emperours (instigated by the great Red Dragon) raised against them: but that God was a Strength to the Poor, a Refuge to the Needy in his distress, a Refuge from the Storm, a Shadow from the Heat, when the Blast of the terrible ones was as a Storm against the wall; as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 25. 4.

Which made S. Paul, in behalf of himself and his Fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord, acknowledge,

That though they were troubled on every side, yet were they not distressed; though perplexed, yet not in despair; though persecuted, yet not forsaken; though cast down, yet not destroyed, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. Even then when no man stood with him, but all men forsook him, notwithstanding the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him; and he was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion: as he tells us, 2 Tim. 4. 16. Which brings in my

#### II. OBSERVATION.

That God makes the Habitation of Believers safe to

them, though they be alone.

It is true not onely, that from God alone they have a fafe and secure Dwelling; but also when they are alone, when they have none to help them besides him: yea, when there are very many, very potent, very malicious Enemies against them, yet even then God makes them

dwell in Safety and Confidence.

The Lord, faith David, (Pfal. 27. 1, 2, 3, 5.) is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the Wicked, even mine Enemies and my Foes, came upon me to eat up my slesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an Hoast should encamp against me, my Heart should not fear: though War should rise against me, in this will I be consident. For in the time of Trouble he shall hide me in his Pavilion: in the secret of his Tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a Rock.

The many Experiences he had of remarkable Evafions and Deliverances, when he was (as it were) in the Lion's mouth; how he killed Goliah alone, with a Sling and a Stone, and cut off his Head with his own Sword; how he flew the Lion and the Bear; how he aworded Sant's Javelin cast at him; escaped Apprehen-

fion

fion in his Bed by his Wife Michal's Cunning, Sanl's Fury by his Rapture and Prophefying at Ramah, the Treachery of the men of Keilah, the Malevolence of the Ziphims, the Design of the Philistines in the Court of Achish King of Gath; these made him full of Considence of God's Assistance in the greatest imminent Perils, though he were Single, and had none that he could trust to.

It was no news to David, that God's Power is no whit abated by the Multitude of Enemies, and the want of Helpers. Abraham's Victory over the Kings that took Sodom, Pharaoh's Overthrow at the Red Sea, Sampson's Slaughter of the Philistines with the Jawbone of an Ass, his carrying away the Gates of Azzah, Shamgar's slaying of 600 Philistines with an Ox-goad, fonathan and his Armour-bearer's Victory over the same People, were such Examples as made his Heart to

be fixed, and not to shrink at evil Tidings.

The like Assurance of God's Might made Asa, when he was invaded by Zerah the Ethiopian with an Army of a Thousand thousand, and 300 Chariots, to cry unto the Lord his God, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power, 2 Chron. 14. 11. And of this Deliverance then, Hanani the Seer minds him, when he let go his Faith in God, and relied on the King of Syria: Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge Hoast, with very many Chariots and Horsemen? yet because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him, 2 Chron. 16. 8, 9.

Elisha was not dismaied at the Army of the Syrians which besieged him in Dothan: he knew there were more with him then against him, though his Servant's

eyes could discern none to be present but Enemies. Hezekiah was not terrified by the proud Vaunts of Rabshakeh, or the reviling menacing Letter of Sennacherib. He knew that the God of Israel was the Lord, even he onely: that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creatour of the ends of the Earth, neither fainteth, nor is weary; there is no searching of his Understanding: that he giveth Power to the faint, and to them that have no Might he increaseth Strength. Even the youths shall faint and he weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength; they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint; as it is Isa. 40. 28, 29, 30, 31.

The same Spirit in a more ample measure was in the Holy Apostles when they were brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim. S. Paul, when it was foretold by Agabus that he should be bound at Jerusalem, when he was brought before the Council of the Jews, the Roman Governours, Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, knew in whom he believed; that he was able to keep the Depositum, that which he had committed to him. When he received the Sentence of death in himself, he trusted in him that raiseth from the dead. Thus S. Stephen, when stoned, commended his Spirit into the hands of his Saviour, and fell asleep. And this brings me to the

### HI. OBSERVATION.

That in Assurance that God onely makes them, though alone, and destitute of Help from any else, to dwell in Safety, Considence, or Hope, Holy Believers can quietly take their Repose, lie down and sleep, though environed with Enemies, even the chiefest, Hell, and Death, and him that hath the power of Death, to wit, the Devil.

This

This frame of Spirit Holy David did discover in many of the Psalms, especially in the 31. where having avouched God to be his strong Rock, and his House of defence to fave him, vers. 2. he thereupon, without any Commotion of mind, deposits himself with God. Into thine hand (faith he) I commit my Spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth, vers. 5. He was affured that he was his God; that his Times were in his bands; that great was his Goodness which was laid up for them that fear him; that he would hide them in his Presence from the Pride of man; that he would keep them secretly in a Pavilion from the strife of Tongues; that he preserveth the Faithfull: and therefore exhorts them to be of good Courage; and God should strengthen the Heart of all them that hope in the Lord, verf. 14, 15, 19, 20, 23, 24.

But in none was this Composedness of Soul so eminent as it was in our Lord Christ: who, though it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to Grief; though he were injured more then any man, he was inclosed with the affembly of the Wicked, they pierced his Hands and his Feet; though his Heart like wax was melted in the midst of his Bowells, and he cried out, O God, my God, why hast thou for saken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my Roaring? though his Soul was made an Offering for Sin; yet did he then pray for his Enemies, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doe: and when he had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit, and so gave up the Ghost, Luk. 23: 46. He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his mouth: when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, I Pet. 2. 22, 23:

The same Tranquillity of mind did S. Stephen shew

at his death. And after the Example of the chief Shepherd of their Souls, and the Protomartyr of the Christian Profession, have the Holy Martyrs and Confessours in all Ages (with the greatest Fortitude and Undauntedness of spirit, conjoyned with Serenity and Calmness of mind, unconquerable Patience, and Submission to God's Will, (far beyond the Philosophers Insensibleness, or Roman Stoutness, which was accompanied with much inward Regret at their Sufferings, Indignation against the Tyranny of them that oppressed them, Vexation at their hard Destiny,) yea with Alacrity and Joyfulness of heart,) laid themselves down to fleep, even in the midst of the Fire, as if it had been in a Bed of Roses, triumphing over the most extreme Cruelties of their violent Persecutours, that were mad with Rage against the Sheep of Christ; who herein followed their Shepherd, who was led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, and like a Lamb dumb before the Shearers, so opened he not his mouth, Act. 8. 32.

This excellent Temper of spirit in Holy Believers ariseth from the Conscience of their Integrity, and the vigour of their Faith. A good Cause and an upright Heart are very prevalent to allay all inward Fluctuations of mind, and to arm the Heart against outward, though stormy, Occurrences. The Righteons, saith Solomon, (Prov. 28. 1.) are bold as a Lion. They that fear God need not fear Men or Devils. Such as know the Uprightness of their Heart, the Justice of their Cause, (especially when their Danger is for Righteousness sake, for God,) can appeal to God with Considence, can mind God as Hezekiab did, Lord, remember that I have walked before thee with an upright Heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, Isa. 38. 3.

It was our Lord's Argument, in that his Soliloquy with his Father, that Bosome-prayer, wherein he did expecto-

expectorate himself, open his Heart to his Father, Joh. 17.4, 5. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work thou gavest me to doe: And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. This was his Plea

when he was to be betrayed and crucified.

It is so in like manner with all that doe the Will of God. They know the work of Righteonsness is Peace; and the effect of Righteonfness, Quietness and Assurance for ever, Ifa. 32. 17. They know that God will keep him in perfect Peace whose mind is stayed on him; becanse he trusteth in him, Isa. 26.3. Faith doth assure them, that he that keepeth Ifrael doth neither sumber nor fleep: that as it is true, Diabolus non dormit, the Devil seepeth not, but goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; so Dominus non dormit, the Lord sleeps not, but his Eyes are open upon the Righteous. He is that most vigilant Shepherd, that keeps his Sheep night and day. They know that if God be with them, none, either Tyrant or Devil, can be against them. That the Prince of Life hath by Death destroyed him that had the power of Death, to wit, the Devil; and delivered them that, through fear of Death, were all their life-time subject to Bondage. That they may take up their Emvision, their Triumph-song, their Io Paan, O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? That he that gave his own Son for them, will with him freely give them all things. That he is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City, which hath Foundations made and built by himself in a heavenly Country; where no Nero's or Domitians or Diocletians, no bloudy Bonner's or Spanish Inquisitours shall come; where no Infernal Spirits nor Sons of Belial shall approach to hurt. None shall be able to lay any thing to their charge: they have God to justifie justifie them; Christ to intercede for them. And therefore neither Height, nor Depth, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any Creature, shall be able to separate them from

the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hereby they have that Peace of God which passeth all understanding, which keeps, as a Garrison, their Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus. And therefore they can rest in their Beds, without sear of humane Tortures, or haunting Ghosts. They can sleep in the dust of the Earth, with expectation of a better Resurrection: and, after David's Example here, they can resolve to lie down, and sleep, for that the Lord maketh them dwell in Sasety; and this with hope of Rising again to Lise, and of having Dominion over their Enemies in that Morning in which the Sun of Righteousness shall appear again from Heaven with Healing in his Wings.

#### APPLICATION.

And now, I befeech you, learn to discern between the Righteons and the Wicked. How fearfull are the Minds of them that are troubled with an evil Conscience, that are not armed with Faith in God! Every Report of an invading Enemy, of a walking Ghost, any ghastly Apparition, any unusuall Noise, terrifies them, and takes away their Sleep. Solitariness is a Terrour to them, specially in the Night. Cain gets him from the Presence of the Lord into the Land of Nod: Caligula runs under a Bed at a Clap of thunder: Adrian whines in his mournfull Ditty, when he is to part with his Soul from his Body. Sickness appalls others. The message of Death makes a Saul fall all along on the Earth; a churlish Nabal's Heart die within him as a Stone.

On the contrary, Holy David sleeps quietly in a Cave, though Saul's Army be near him; he dies quietly, though Adonijah go about to take his Crown from off his Head. Job can trust God, though he kill him. S. Paul can trust in him that raiseth from the dead, when he receives the Sentence of death in himself.

Oh then that you would consider these things to purpose. Time may come, wherein you may have the Name of Magor-missabib, Terrour round about: armed Souldiers may break into your Houses; the Arrow of God may be shot into your Bodies; Pestilence may enter in at your Windows: sooner or later, Sickness

and Death will surprize you, and seise on you.

If at that hour thy Spirit be wounded also, and God call thy Sins to Remembrance; if when the Decree goes forth, (This night shall they fetch away thy Soul from thee,) thou hast nothing but thy full Barns, thy high Honours and Dignities, the Favour of Princes, to secure thee: Oh how wilt thou be like Belshazzar, when he saw the Hand-writing on the Wall? Thy Knees will dash one against another, thy Sleep will be gone; thy Terrours will rush in upon thee like an armed man; thou wilt feel Hell-Torments while thou art yet on Earth.

On the other side, if thou hast Hezekiah's Uprightness, and David's Faith, thou wilt sleep in Peace, and die with Comfort: God's Grace will support thee here, and advance thee hereafter: He will guide thee with his Counsell, and after receive thee to Glory.

Oh be wise then, I beseech you: Take heed of Sin, which will defile you: it will make your Bed as uneasie as if you lay on Flints or Thorns; breed a Worm in your Conscience, which will gnaw on you to Eternity; kindle a Fire in your Bowells, which will never be quenched, but burn for ever; produce the Sting of a fiery Scorpion, which will never be cured. Get out B b b

370 A Believer's Safety, &c. Sermon XXIV.

the Venome of it therefore by Repentance not to be repented of; malk before God, and be upright; live by Faith in Christ, and sow to the Spirit: then shall you walk without perplexing Fear here, take your Repose with Ease in the night, sleep in the Dust sweetly, and injoy the Rest of God's People in an everlasting Sabbatism in Heaven. Which the Lord vouchsafe to us for Christ's sake. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

MAR-

### MARVELLOUS LOVE.

## The Twenty-fifth SERMON.

### I JOHN iij. I.

Behold what manner of Love the Father bath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.

HIS Epistle was written by the Beloved Disciple, and may well be styled, the Love-letter: Love runs in every Vein of it. He that tasted of much Love, had his Heart and his Tongue and his Pen so sweetned with it, that his whole Writing is Amatory: wherein he commemorateth the Love he had received; and endeavoureth both to affect others with that Love which was shed abroad as a sweet Ointment in his Heart, and to infect (if you take the word aright) others with the same Philtrum or Love-Cup that he had drunk deep of; that so he and all others might be full of Love.

Yet in this matter of Love, you are not to imagine any vain, light, fond, merely complementall or fruit-less thing suggested, such as is wont to be among wanton Wits, phantastick Poets, or idle persons, (as if that were here minded by S. John:) but the greatest Love of Heaven, to be answered by the greatest Love on Earth; the true, reall, cordiall, most enriching

Love of God, in the highest degree such Mortalls as we are may be capable of, to be returned and repay'd with the greatest Love of Gratitude, Reverence and Observance, that we are able to pay upon the sight of this Bill, which the Apostle here exhibits to our view: Be-

hold what manner of Love, &c.

This Text shews us the chief Point of the Saints Preferment, that they are called the Sons of God. And we are this day to have our Hearts possessed with a sense of the greatest Love, the Love of Christ, in dying for us; then which, our Lord Christ saith, (Joh. 15.13.) no man hath greater: and the Love of God, in giving his Son for us; which Christ mentions with a [Sic,] So God loved the world, &c. Joh. 3. 16. as if it were unexpressible. And S. John here sets forth the chiefest Fruit of both in terms of Admiration, as if it were inestable, inviting all to behold it, Behold, &c.

Now there needs the most melodious or eloquent Tongue of men or Angells, to set forth this Love of God which passeth Knowledge. For want of a better, I shall endeavour, according to my time and ability, to present to you this admirable Spectacle of the Love of

God; and confider,

1. The Kind of it; what manner of Love.

2. The Authour of it; the Father.
3. The Freeness of it; bath bestowed.

4. The Effect; that we should be called the Sons of God.

The Adverb of demonstration, inviting us to confider it; Behold what manner, &c.
 Of all which briefly.

I. The Kind of this Love; what manner of Love.

Love is the prime Affection of the Spirit, and may be, not unfitly, termed the hypportunion, the leading or ruling Affection. As we love, so we delight, or joy, or desire, or hope; and on the contrary, hate the op-

posite to what we love, grieve in the absence or want fear the privation of our beloved Object: fo that it may be termed the great Wheel of the Soul, that fets all the Affections in motion, and all the Faculties on work, for the thing loved, or against its opposite. Whence Love is a comprehensive term, and is used sometimes for Delight or Joy, which the School-men term Love of Complacency; for Defire, termed by them Love of Concupiscence; for Affection to the good of another, which is termed Love of Benevolence or Good will: which last is most truly Love, it being that whereby there is an Emanation, a Flowing out or Egress of the Soul to others. And this onely is by Aristotle (Rhet. 2.) taken notice of, as if no other were worth the name of Love, and in this matter defined; It is that Affection or Motion of the Soul, whereby the person loving wills Good to him whom he loves, and is according to his power active to procure it.

Of this fort is the Love that S. John would have us here view, Behold, &c. It is God's Good will, whereby he intends good to us; and deserves our most seri-

ous and affectionate Consideration.

It is true, if God had glorified himself in our Condemnation, raised us up, as he did Pharaoh, that he might shew his Power on us, and that his Name might be declared throughout the Earth; we must not have gainsaid: he is no Debtour to us, he giveth not account of any of his Actions. The Clay is not to say to the Potter, Why hast thou made me thus? He is uncontrollable; he will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and will have Compassion on whom he will have Compassion, Rom. 9. 15. But that which should chiefly attract our Eyes and Heart, as most radiant, and shining forth as a Pearl, to be highliest valued and delighted in by us, is this his Love of Benevolence.

It is Goodness, and not Greatness, we are desirous to see, and do freely remember, and pleasingly celebrate. We sometimes are willing to hear of the Exaltation of another, and are ready to magnify it: but not without Regret of mind, unless there be a Complication of Goodness with Greatness. The Magnificence of a great Prince is a pleasing Object to us, when we know him to be gracious, kind, mercifull, and bountifull: otherwise, what-ever we doe with our Eyes and Knees and Tongues, yet our Hearts are averse from him. But when these concurre, when Power is tempered with Love, and that Love is a cordiall Benevolence, as it is in my Text; then it deserves a Videte, as here, Behold what manner of love, &c. Which leads me to the next thing.

II. The Authour: it is the Love of the Father.

The Love of a Friend is highly valued by us. How doth David celebrate the Love of Jonathan to himself? My Brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy Love to me was wonderfull, 2 Sam. 1. 26. And indeed his Love was admirable, who preferred a Friend before a Father, who endeavoured to preserve him whom his Father sought to destroy; yea, then stuck fast to him, when he might, and perhaps did, understand, that David's Advancement to the Throne of Israel would be his and his Posteritie's Ruine.

Yet this Love is not comparable to the Love of a Father. A Father loves his Child, though his Child loves not him. A Father loves his Child, and will doe him good before himself: will, like Zalencus, pluck out his Eye, to preserve his Child's; venture and cast away his Life, to save his Child's. Fathers care little what they eat, wear, undergoe, how they labour, so as their Children, be well, and well provided for. And such is the Love that S. John calls to us to be-

hold.

hold, Behold what munner of Love the Father hath be-

stowed on us.

God is the Father by way of excellency, the Father of Fathers; the Univerfall Father, who hath formed all things; the Father of all Men, for we are all his Offspring, Act. 17. 28. But in a peculiar manner he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of his Love, Col. 1. 3. He proclaimed from Heaven, (Matth. 3. 17.) This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. His orient brightest Love shines most directly in its Zenith on Christ; he is under the Line : but it shines also on us from him; He hath made us accepted, or Favourites, in the beloved, Eph. 1.6. And so he is become the Father of all the Saints adopted in Christ Jesus, and made the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 26. 'Tis this Father's Love that is here presented to be seen; His, who is styled the Father of Mercies, the God of all Consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 3. the Father of Lights, from whom every good and every perfect Gift cometh, with whom is no Variableness or shadow of turning, Jam. 1. 17. the Father who is Love it felf in the abstract, 1 70h. 4. 16. God is love. It is not an Accident in him, but his very Essence; so that if he cease to love, he ceaseth to be. Dulce nomen Patris, The Name of a Father is a sweet Name; especially of such a Father.

I will goe to my Father, said the Prodigall Son, when he knew not what to doe, being brought into great Extremities. Though he had wasted his Estate by playing the Unthrist, yet he saith, I will arise, and goe to my Father, and say unto him, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son: and his Father meets him, hath Compassion on him, runs to him, salls on his Neck and kisses him, puts on him the best Robe, a Ring on his hand, Shoes on his feet, kills the satted Calf, eats and

drinks

drinks and is merry with him, after all his Miscarriages. Luk. 15. So forcible, so free, so indulgent, so active, so constant and so unalterable is the Love of a Father.

If there be so much Water-in a River, there is more in the Ocean: if so much Love in an Earthly Father, there is infinitely more in the Heavenly Father. Be you perfect, faith our Lord, (Matth. 5.48.) as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. As he is perfect in all his Attributes, his Wisedome, Power, Truth, Justice; fo also in his Love. Whence it is that his Love is an everlasting Love: I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore with Loving-kindness have I drawn thee, saith God in the Prophet, Jerem. 31. 3. His Love is an unchangeable Love; his Gifts and Calling are without Repentance, Rom. 11. 29. His Love is a preventing Love, bears date afore ours: 1 70b. 4. 19. We love him, because he first loved us. His Love is a most pure Love, it hath no fordid End, no mercenary Motive. I doe not this, faith God, for your sakes, O House of Ifrael, but for my Holy Name's Sake, Ezek. 36. 22. It is pure Goodness, meer Love, that sets God on work to doe good to us: it is the Love of a Father, which hath no reason from without him, but from his own nature: it is a most active Love, not in shew onely, but in deed and in truth: it is an immense Love, that hath a Height and a Depth, a Length and a Breadth, without bounds: a rich Love; God who is rich in Mercies, for his great Love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickned us together with Christ, Eph. 2.4,5. a Love so ample and full, that he gave his own Son for us, and with him bath freely given us all things, Rom. 8. And all is done gratis, without Fee or Compenfation, which is next to be observed.

III. The Freeness of it: it is given or bestowed.

Donatur, (fay the Civill Lawyers) quod nullo fure cogente conceditur: That is said to be given, which cannot by any Law be enforced. Sure that Love which the Father vouchfafes to us is such, as there was no Reason to demand it, no Title whereupon to claim it. It was Love to us before we thought of it. I was found, faith God, (Rom. 10. 20.) of them that Sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me. Yea, God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us: When we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, Rom. 5. 8, 10. There was nothing in us but Hatred of God, when he loved us: and we were fo far from any Merit de Condigno, of Condignity, or de Congruo, of Congruity, that indeed there was the greatest Demerit in us. So far were we from deserving God's Love, that we rather merited to be rejected by him, (by reason of our many Provocations of him to Anger, ) as the proper Fruit of our Demeanour. The Wages of Sin is Death: but the Gift of God is eternall Life through Tesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6. 23.

Nor could there be any After-dutifulness which might be accounted a fit and just Compensation on our part for such Love. Who is there that gives any thing to God first? Rom. 11.35. Surely when we bring forth any Fruit to God, it is but what is of his own Culture. Christ is the Vine, his Father is the Husbandman, (and we are God's Husbandry, 1 Cor. 3.9.) he it is that purgeth the Branches in Christ, that they may bring forth more Fruit, Joh. 15. 1, 2. Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? saith the same Apostle, 1 Cor. 4.7. Yea, were it imaccined.

gined, (to suppose an Impossibility,) that we could of our felves, by our own Free will, by the Light of Nature, so ingratiate ourselves with God, as to procure his Favour; that we could obtain Arte proprià, by our own Skill, or Marte proprio, by our own Ability, our Filiation, our Regeneration, our Adoption to be God's Sons: yet were not God ingaged by any Worth of our Actions to yield it us; this were no Purchace, no Exchange of quid pro quo, no advantaging God, that he might benefit us. Rightly saith Elihu, Job 35. 7, 8. If thou be Righteous, what givest thou to him? or what receiveth he of thy hand? Thy Wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art; and thy Righteousness may profit the son of man. But, alas! all that in such a case we could doe, all that Adam himself in his Innocency and Integrity could have done, could not have given us such a Claim, as that we could have challenged our Adoption as due to us according to distributive Justice, in an Arithmetical or Geometrical proportion between our Actings and God's Adoption; but that still it must be taken as the free Gift liberrimi Agentis, of the most free Agent, as the effect of the purest and most immense Love. And therefore well faid the Apostle, Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed on us, of free Gift, that we should be called the Sons of God. Which is the next thing to be confidered.

IV. The effect of this Love of God: that we should

be called, &c.

The Sons of God are of many forts. The Magistrates are so by Office, Psal. 82. 6. the Angells by Dignity, Job 1. 6. Adam by Creation, Luk. 3. 38. and so all other men, Ast. 17. 29. the Posterity of Seth, (as it is conceived) Gen. 6. 2. by Profession; our Lord Christ is his own Son by peculiar and eternal Generation, Rom. 8. 32. All Believers are his Sons by Regeneration:

As many as received him, to them be gave power to be the Sons of God even to as many as believe in his name; which were born not of bloud, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, Joh. 1. 12, 13. By Adoption: God having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by fesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his Will, to the praise of the glory of his Grace, Eph. 1. 5,6. Regeneration is by a Change of us inwardly, whereby we are renewed in the Spirit of our minds, and put on the New man, which after God is created in Righteousness and Holiness of truth, Eph. 4. 23, 24. Adoption is an Act which alters the outward Estate, whereby a person becomes as a Son to another, as Moses was to Pharaoh's Daughter, Heb. 11. 24. It is Natura similitudo, ut Filium quis habere possit quem non generaverit; (Gaius Inst. 1. tit.5.) an Imitation of Nature, whereby a person may have another man's Child, as if he were his own Son: fo that he is his Child by a Legal Right, though not by naturall Birth; and is to own his Adopter as his Father, and he the adopted as his Child. And it is this that S. John here means, Behold what manner of Love the Father hath given us, that we should be called, by reason of our Regeneration and Adoption, the Sons of God.

And not onely that we should be so called, as if it imported a meer Title, Appellation, or (nudum inane Nomen) a bare and empty Name. Sure this Adoption, as it is by the best, highest, richest Father, so it is to the best, greatest, and most ample Benefits. He that is thus the Son of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, hath the Name, the Dignity, the Honour of a Son of God; hath the Spirit of his Son, crying Abba, Father, Gal. 4.6. hath the Apparel of a Son of God, the white Linen, which is the Righteonsness of Saints; hath the Provision, Protection, Attendance of a Child of God, the Angells are ministring Spirits to him, Heb. 1. 14. The Spirit of

Ccc 2

God is his; he is a Member of Christ's Body; the Promises are his. He hath the Society of Saints on Earth, and is come to the Church of the first-born that are written in Heaven. All things are his, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Life, Death, things present, things to come; and he is Christ's, and Christ God's, I Cor. 3.22, 23. If he be a Son, then an Heir, an Heir of God, a Joynt-heir with Christ, Rom. 8. 17. And can more Favour be defired or imagined to be done by the most Holy and High God to such Beggars, Malefactours, Rebells, condemned Prisoners, such base contemptible Wretches as we are? We may here cry out with the Apostle, O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisedome and Knowledge (I may adde, and Love) of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out ! Rom. 11.33. With the greatest reafon then doth S. John call upon us to behold this: which is the last thing to be considered.

V. The Adverb of demonstration, inviting us to con-

fider this Love: Behold what manner, &c.

And this may also serve for the

#### APPLICATION.

This is then the Use to be made of what hath been said (and, did time permit, might be more amply declared) of the Love of God in our Adoption; that we are to behold it, not so much with the Eye of our Body, as with the Eye of our Mind. Sure the Apostle S. Paul thought this to be of so great consequence, that he ceased not to make mention of the Ephesian Believers in his Prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, might give them the Spirit of wisedom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; that the eyes of their Understanding being enlightned, they might know what is the hope of his Calling, and what the riches of the glo-

ry of his Inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his Power to us-ward, who believe, Eph. 1.16, 17, 18, 19. This of all things is most worthy our Contemplation; our most full, constant, accurate Meditation. We should behold it in all the Effects of it in us, and towards us. Every Motion of his Spirit, every Providence in escaping Temptations, every Gospel-Sermon, every Prayer we make, invite us to this Contem-

plation.

You that are to receive the Holy Sacrament, what other Business have you but to tast how gracious the Lord is? The Lord's Supper is visible Verbum, a visible Word, that minds you of this Love of God, in giving his Son for you, to make you his Sons. Look not then so much on what Christ did, as why; that it was for you. See your own Unworthiness; be humbled for your Sins: but behold the Riches of God's Love. See it so as to admire it, so as to praise it. Let this be an Eucharist, a Thanksgiving. Doe that on Earth that the Saints in Heaven now doe; Receive it with Hallelnjahs in your Hearts, if not with your Tongues.

Remember this with rejoycing in God, Hope in him, Prayer to him, as your Father; Love to him, who so loved you; Love to each other, as being one Body and one Bread, being partakers of this one Bread, 1 Cor. 10.17.

But chiefly behold it with Reverence and Dutifulness to your Father; that you may be blameless, and sincere, and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are to shine as Lights in the world, Phil. 2. 15. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

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# KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICE UNITED.

## The Twenty-fixth SER MON.

P S A L. CXIX. 34.

Give me Understanding, and I shall keep thy

Law; yea I shall observe it with my whole

Heart

F all the Psalms, there is none which hath so much of Curiosity, and yet so much Plainness, as this. In the Form of it, is much Poeticall Art: in the Matter of it, much Integrity and Holiness of Heart. The Art is seen in observing the order of the Hebrew Letters, in assigning to each Letter eight Verses, and beginning every Verse in every Octonary with the same Letter. The Integrity and Holiness of Heart is observable in the Expressions, which for the most part contain Protestations of Integrity, or holy Petitions; both which are in the words I have read to you: in which are contained,

I. A Petition; Give me Understanding.

2. A Protestation or Promise; expressed, first purely, And I shall keep thy Law: secondly modally, declaring the manner of his keeping it, And I shall keep it, or, Yea I shall observe it, with my whole Heart.

From

From the words these Points offer themselves to us.

1. That the Understanding of God's Laws is a very descrable thing.

2. That this Understanding is God's Gift, and to

be fought of him.

3. That when we understand God's Laws, we should observe them.

4. That we should keep them with our whole Heart. Of these in their order.

#### I. OBSERVATION.

That the Understanding of God's Laws is a most desi-

rable thing.

If we will believe the wisest of men, this will be out of doubt. It is the main Argument of many Chapters in the Book of Solomon's Proverbs, (the Quintessence of his Wisedom,) to commend to us, as the most precious thing that can be chosen, the Understanding of God's Laws; which he calls the Fear of the Lord, and the Knowledge of God, Prov. 2. 5. And Chap. 3. 14, 15. he saith, The merchandise thereof is better then the merchandise of Silver, and the gain thereof then sine Gold. She is more precious then Rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Again, Prov. 4. 7. Wisedom is the principal thing; therefore get Wisedom, and with all thy getting get Understanding.

I should recite to you a great part of Solomon's Books, and of the Psalms of David his Father, besides other parcells of Holy Scripture, should I heap up all those Passages which set out the Worth of the Understanding God's Laws. But I shall make this Point more apposite to your use, by considering the Son, why it is so; which will also prove the son, that it

is fo.

Any right Knowledge is defirable, fince every man is ambitious to know; faith Aristotle, in the first words of his Metaphysicks. It is true, there is Science falfely so called, as the Apostle's phrase is, I Tim. 6. 20. which learned Interpreters conceive to be meant of the Gnoflicks pretended Knowledge, (from whence they usurped the Title of Gnosticks, that is Knowing men,) of the thirty Æones, and such like Fables, devised by Valentius and other like Hereticks, to draw Disciples from the Christian Doctrine after them: of which much may be feen in Irenews his Five Books against Herefies. These also, or some other Fanatick Hereticks of that Time, are conceived to be meant by them that know the Depths of Satan, as they speak, Rev. 2. 24. Such kind of Knowledge the Apostle bids Timothy not to give heed to, as the Fables, and endless Genealogies, whether of Gnosticks or Jews, and as ministring Questions, rather then godly Edifying which is in Faith. I Tim. 1. 4. which he calls profane and old wives Fables, to be refused, Chap. 4. 7. perverse Disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, to be avoided, I Tim. 6. 5. foolish and unlearned Questions. which engender Strife, 2 Tim. 2. 23. profane and vain Babblings, which encrease unto more Ungodliness, 2 Tim. 2. 16. Jewish Fables, and Commandments of men that turn from the Truth, Tit. 1. 14. Foolish Questions and Genealogies, and Contentions and Strivings about the Law, which are unprofitable and vain, such as the Cabalistical Conceits and Talmudical Dotages of Jewish Rabbins have been of old, and of later days many of the Popes Decretall Epiftles, many of the Monks Legendary Tales in their Book which they termed Aurea Legenda, the Golden Legend, (though Ludovicus Vives faith true, He that devised it had a Brazen Face, he that believes it a Leaden Heart;) all these, and Ddd whatwhat-ever is of like stamp, are to be abhorred, as coming from Satan to corrupt mens minds from the Sim-

plicity that is in Christ.

But all true Knowledge, of what kind soever, is justly desirable, as being both an Ornament, and some way or other usefull to Man, whose Excellency, whereby he exceeds Beasts, is his Knowledge: and his Inferiority to Angels, is his Defect in it. And though some of late have endeavoured to prejudice the minds of men against the Study of Arts, Sciences, Languages, and other Learning taught in Universities: yet it is for no other Reason, but because of their own Illiterateness. Scientia neminem habet Inimicum, nist Ignorantem: No man undervalues Learning, but the Ignorant.

Nevertheless some Knowledge is more desirable then other; and above all the reft, the Knowledge of God, his Laws, Will, Counfell, Works: which indeed make men more truly wife then the Knowledge of all the Secrets of Nature, Policies of State, humane Arts and Sciences. Princely Wifedom to Govern, is a very excellent Gift. To have the Understanding which Solomon had, to judge and rule so great a People as that of Ifrael, was a very glorious Gift of God, and such as made him renowned above all the men of the earth in his days, and many Ages after: yet he found a Vanity in this. I gave my beart, faith he, (Eccles. 1. 17, 18.) to know Wisedom, and to know Madness and Folly: I perceived that this also is Vexation of spirit. For in much Wisedom is much Grief: and he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow. Be he the wisest Statesman, or profoundest Scholar, be he Doctor profundus, Angelicus, Seraphicus, though he have gotten those glorious Titles wherewith some have set out them whom they have esteemed; yet if he review his Projects, his Writings,

Writings, he will find cause to repent of them, to say, Non putaram, This I considered not, to make Retractations with S. Austin, to charge himself with Folly and That which we reade Prov. 9. 10. is a Maxime aterna veritatis, of eternal truth, The Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding. That Knowledge which is of God and his Will, that is practical as well as spe-

culative, is the true Understanding.

1. Because it is the Knowledge of the most excellent We much prize the Knowledge of the most abstruce things, the things most abstract from sense. The Knowledge of Transcendents, Stars, Motions, Influences of the Heavens, Angels and Spirits, is with much Curiofity inquired into: and they are rare Doctours who can discover such sublime things. But the Knowledge of God, his Properties, Ways, Precepts and Counsels, is far more excellent, as being of more glorious things. We think the Knowledge of Reasons of State, Arcana Imperii, the Art of Governing Men and Kingdoms, more excellent then the Knowledge of Husbandry, how to order Beafts, to plough and fow and plant; to be a wife Statesman, more excellent then to be a skilfull Rustick. But Theology is much to be preferred before any of these; yea a Doctour in Divinity before a Physician or a Lawyer, as teaching the things of God, which are most abstruse, and of highest Speculation. To be wife in these things, is to be wife as Daniel, who is made the Pattern of a wife man, Ezek. 28. 3. because the Spirit of God was in him, Light and Understanding to reveal the Secrets of God. Yea, it is to be wife as an Angel of God, Angels being proverbially made the Exemplar of Wisedom, 2 Sam. 14. 17. whose excellency of Knowledge stands in their beholding God's Face: by which (though not as in a natural Glass, according to the Conceit of them that Ddd 2 talk

talk of Speculum Trinitatis, a Glass of the Trinity, as if he that sees God, must know all things, by seeing him that sees all things; that's an Errour, for then the Angels should be Omniscient: but in a free, clear Glass,) they see more of his Glory and Works, receive more immediate Orders from him, understand more of the affairs of Heaven and Divine Mysteries, then men that dwell in houses of Clay; and the more is revealed unto them of God's Actings, Intendments or Appointments,

the more do they increase in Wisedom.

2. Because this Knowledge of God is the most true, clear, certain, fatisfying Knowledge. There is Imperfection in all other Knowledge, as there is in the things that are known. He that knows most and best of other matters, yet finds no Rest or Satisfaction in them. There is Uncertainty even in some things in the Mathematicks; and in those things that are known best. there is no great Content to the mind by their Knowledge, because it is but of things that shall end. Knowledge of humane things shall vanish away, I Cor. 12. 8. How many thousands of Learned men have at last, after all their Studying, Arguing, Writing, Reading, come to Socrates his Determination, Hoc unum scio, quod Nihil scio; I know this one thing, that I know Nothing? How many, the more they plod on the things of Nature and Art, are the more puzzled? One that was counted a great Wit of the world, when he had studied the Cause of the Sea's Motions, but could not comprehend it, threw himself into it, with this Saying, Quoniam ego non capio te, tu capies me ; Because I cannot perceive thee, thou shalt receive me.

But in the Knowledge of God, his Will, his Laws and Counsels, is Perfection. Quietat Intellectum: The Clearness, Truth, Beauty, Stability of the Knowledge and things known, satisfie the Mind. I have seen an

end of all Perfection: but thy Commandment is exceeding broad, faith David, Pfal. 119. 96. There are wonderous things in God's Law, vers. 18. There is no Sophistry or Fallacy in any of God's Words; there is none of the Poison of the old Serpent, which deceiveth the whole world: But, (as it is Pfal. 19. 7, 8, 9.) The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting, or restoring, the Soul: the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wife the Simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart: the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the Judgments of the Lord are true and righ-

teous altogether.

3. The Knowledge of God and his Law is most defirable, because it is that Knowledge which pleaseth God most. 'Tis true, all the Works of God are worth the knowing: The Works of the Lord are great, fought out of all them that have pleasure therein, Psal. 111. 2. God allows us to fearch out the Secrets of Nature; and it is a great Excellency in men, to find out the hidden Qualities and Virtues of Natural Bodies: but to terminate our Knowledge on them, and not to have respect to the Maker of them, not to look unto him that fashioned the World long agoe, as the Prophet speaks Isa. 22. 11. much more to deny his Work, to ascribe it to a casual Concourse of Atoms, to the Nature of the things themselves, without acknowledging the First Cause, Primum Motorem, the First Mover and Univerfall Efficient, is monftrous Madness, and a thing extremely odious to the Divine Majesty.

Yea, they that are the greatest Philosophers, if they know not God's Will, have not Understanding how to worship God, and to doe his Pleasure, are usually more brutish then others: they are given up to vile Affections, to a reprobate Mind, to doe those things which are not convenient, but against Nature, such as Beasts doe not, and none but besotted or bewitched men would doe.

Some kind of Knowledge is utterly forbidden us. Well did those Converts (mentioned Act. 19. 19.) who used curious Arts, when they brought their Books together, and burned them before all men; though counting the Price of them, they found it fifty thousand pieces of Silver. All Knowledge of infernall Magick is abominable to God. Then our Knowledge pleaseth God, when we follow on to know the Lord, Hos. 6. 3. when we understand what he reveals to us for our Duty and his Honour. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our Children for ever, that we may doe all the words

of his Law, Deut. 29. 29.

4. Because the Understanding of God and his Law. or Will, is that which is of greatest Advantage to us, and therefore most to be defired by us. It is true which Solomon faith, Eccles. 2. 13, 14. that Wifedom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darkness. Wise man's eyes are in his head; he avoideth many Dangers, takes prosperous Courses, by reason of his Prudence in discerning between things hurtfull and things helpfull to him: for want of which the Fool walketh in Darkness, stumbles often, and falls into Pits and Precipices. Yet, as he saith vers. 15, 16. as it happeneth to the Fool, so to the Wise; as the Fool dieth, so dieth the Wise. Neither doth Wisedom in Sciences, Arts, Policy, Cunning in Trading, or any fuch Skill as men are most applauded for, (Civil or Military,) secure a man from Dangers without, or Fears within; common Calamities, or particular Miseries; Death, or Damnation. But the Wisedom that is from above, whereby we know God's Will, know the things of the Spirit

of God, which are freely given us of God, arms us against Temptations, Fear of Death and Judgment to come, and comforts us in Tribulation. It is that which is able to make us wise unto Salvation, as the Holy Scriptures did Timothy. It brings us to God, as it comes from God. Which leads us to the

#### IL OBSERVATION.

That the Understanding of God's Law and Will is the

Gift of God, and to be sought from him.

Every good and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableness, neither shadow of turning. And therefore if any lack Wisedom, he is to ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, James 1.5, 17. Job, after his inquiry, Where shall Wisedom be found? and where is the place of Understanding? resolves, The Depth saith, It is not in me; and the Sea saith, It is not in me: Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. He declareth it, prepareth it, and searcheth it out, Job 28. 12, 14, 22, 23, 27. And indeed it is he onely that gives it, and in such a measure as pleaseth him.

All Understanding is God's Gift: he makes the wise, and the soolish. He can give Solomon Wisedom, turn Achitophel's Counsel into Folly, make soolish the Wisedom of the wise. As they that trust to their own Wisedom, lean to their own Understanding, do follow an Ignis sature, that will lead them into Bogs and Precipices: so they that seek Counsel of God, Wisedom from him in all their Undertakings, that fear themselves, and work out their Salvation with sear and trembling, are most prosperous. It was Solomon's Happiness, that he asked Wisedom

Wisedom of God; and it was his Unhappiness, that he gave his Heart to injoy Pleasure and Mirth, and so doted on his Wives, that they turned away his Heart from God to set up Idol-service. And therefore, by Solomon's Example, we should beware of abusing our Knowledge, by turning God's Grace into Wantonness, and perverting our Understanding to the Service of our Lusts. But, which is the

## III. OBSERVATION.

When we understand God's Laws, we should observe them.

The Observation of God's Law consisteth in two

things.

1. In Considering what it requires, or makes known. The word we translate [ keep ] fignifies the Observance of a Watch-man, who is intent on what he sees, and attentive to what he hears. And this should be the difposition and exercise of every one to whom God speaks. I will hear what God the Lord will speak, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 85. 8. There is nothing more concerns a man, then to have his Ear for God, and his Eye on God. All our Happiness is from him: and therefore all our Thoughts should be towards him. As a Servant that depends on his Master will have his eye on him, and his ear open to him; fo should it be with us: our Ear should hear, and our Heart should consider what God speaks or acts. The Blessed man's Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night, Pfal. 1. 2. And what-ever God does in the world, especially towards us, whereby he either answers our Prayers, or rebukes us for our Sins, either warns us of our evil Doings, or encourages us in doing well, should be observed by us; for by so doing we

we shew we have an Heart to please God, and cause

him to take pleasure in us.

2. In Doing of God's Law, according to what we understand, whether it be by departing from Evil, or doing Good. Unto Man he faid, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisedom; and to depart from Evil, that is Understanding, Job 28. 28. As God's Precepts cannot be observed without learning them; so are they not well learned, unless they be observed. Theology is a practical Science, for Action as well as Speculation. If ye know these things, (saith Christ) happy are- ye if ye doe them, Joh. 13. 17. Practice is the end of Knowledge: and increase of Knowledge is the fruit of Practice. If any man will doe the will of God. he shall know of the Doctrine of Christ, whether it be of God, Joh. 7. 17. A good Understanding have all they that doe his Commandments, Pfal. 111. 10. Not every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. He that heareth these Sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wife man, that built his house on a Rock: And the Rain descended, and the Flouds came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a Rock. And every one that heareth these Sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the Sand: And the Rain descended, and the Flouds came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it, Matth. 7. 21, 24, 25, 26, 27. That Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luk. 12. 47. To him that knoweth to doe good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin, James 4. 17. Sin in a higher degree. Majoris est Criminis Legem spernere, Eee quam

quam nescire, said Salvian. In Ignorance there is Sin; in Contempt of God's Law, in Stubbornness, much more; in Hypocrifie, most of all. Which brings us to our

## IV. OBSERVATION.

That God's Laws are to be kept by us with our whole Heart.

And indeed God's Law is not kept, unless the Heart keep it as well as the Tongue: His Service requires the Inward parts as well as the Outward. Apply thine Heart to Instruction, and thine Ears to the word of Knowledge. My Son, give me thy Heart, and let thine Eyes observe my ways, Prov. 23. 12, 26. The Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisedom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment. The Law of his God is in his Heart; none

of his steps shall slide, Pfal. 37. 30, 31.

It is the Heart that is the Principle or Fountain of good or bad. A good man, out of the good treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil, Matth. 12.25. The most glorious Works of Piety or Charity, that come not from a right Principle within, please God no more then the offering of Swines blond: yea, God counts himself mocked, when our Prayers, Praises, or any Duties we doe, come not from the Heart. Heartless Service is no Service of God, but a Derision of He that is a Spirit, must be served with the Spirit. or else the Service is abhorred.

Nor must God's Law be kept with a part, but with the whole Heart. Bleffed are they that keep his Testimonies, and that seek him with the whole Heart, Pfal. 119.2. He that keeps some of God's Commands, and neglects others, yea he that shall keep the whole Law, and yet

offend

offend in one point, (fince the Authority is the same in all,) is guilty of all, Jam. 2. 10. He must keep them in all his Faculties: in his Mind, by confidering them; in his Memory, by retaining them; in his Purpofes, by chusing them; and in his Affections, by adhering to them. He must keep them with all his Might, with the utmost degree of Observance that he can: and wherein he is defective, he must bewail himself. He must not keep any man's Precepts that consist not with God's; not the Statutes of Omri, or the Ordinances of the house of Ahab, Mic. 6. 16. A divided Heart, a double Heart, an Heart and an Heart, are monstrous, Psal. 12. 2. We cannot serve God, and Mammon. No man can serve two opposite Masters: no nor two coordinate. As we cannot ferve God, while we observe the Traditions of men, that evacuate God's Commands: so neither while we observe the Traditions of men. which are imposed as God's Commands. In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men, faith our Saviour, Matth. 15.9. Yea, all the just Commands of Men must be observed with subordination to God's; they must give place to them, and must be observed because of his Commands. Whatever Servants doe in Obedience to their Masters, they must doe it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, Col. 3. 23. Our Obedience must be de omni, per se, & quaterns ipsum. In a word, all that we doe in Obedience to God, we must doe for God. There must be Integrity without Partiality, and Sincerity without Hypocrifie. What soever we doe, we must doe all, not for our own Praise or finister Ends, but to his Glory, I Cor. 10.31. without magnifying our felves, or aiming at our own carnal Advantage. And this is to keep his Law with our whole Heart.

## APPLICATION.

You have heard how valuable a thing the Understanding of God's Law is; whence it is derived; to what End it should tend; with what Sincerity that End should be prosecuted. I hope hereby you discern the genuine and true Reason why there is so little Wisedom in the world: And I wish you would apply your minds to get that Understanding which will make you truly wife. It is the common Complaint, That the World is full of Fools: and no marvel it should be so, since each man loves to be his own Guide; and even generally all forts of men affect to follow that Darkness which they miss-name the Light within them, and are unwilling to be undeceived from their Errours. Quis intelligit Delicta? is in this sense true. Though all are Children in Knowledge; yet are they loth to abide under the tuition and conduct of their Overfeers. Some miss-lead themselves by their Lusts, some by their Opinions; few move in the direct Line of God's Law: and no marvel then they suffer eclipses of their innate Light. Earthly-mindedness, like the Earth, interposing, keeps the Light of God's Word from them: Love of transitory Pleasures hinders the Light of the Spirit from shining on them. Nor do they lift up their Eyes and Hearts unto the Sun of Righteousness, that he may arise with brightness in his Rays upon them.

It would be infinite to reckon up the Fooleries of Philosophers, Jewish Rabbins, Hereticks, Papists, and all forts of Fanaticks, who have declined from God's Precepts. Let their Errours, their Follies, their Miscarriages, make you inquisitive into God's Law; wary how you turn aside from it; diligent to observe it;

constant in adhering to it; instant with the Father of Lights to direct your Steps in it. They that sail at Sea, count it safest to be in a Ship that hath a good Pilot: They that live in a State, think it happy to live where there are good Laws and good Governours. Sure no Pilot is better then he that steers the Course of the Heavens; no Laws better then the Laws of the Most high; no Government equal to the Government of God. If you leave his Guidance, if you forsake his Laws, you will suffer Shipwreck, and be cast on those barbarous Coasts where Tyrants and Devils domineer.

Oh then, what-ever ye doe, prefer the Understanding of God's Will before all Knowledge: beg earnestly of God, that he would teach you: forget not what ye learn of him: let your whole Heart be sound in his Precepts. Doe as Christ did, whose meat and drink it was to doe the will of his Father; and you shall eat and drink with him in his Kingdom. Which he grant, who loved us, and gave himself for us. To whom, &c.

Amen.

## LAUS DEO.

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on thail ca

## UPRIGHT WALKING.

Part I.

# The Twenty-seventh SER MON.

PROVERBS xiv. 2.

He that walketh in his Uprightness, feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his Ways, de-

spiseth bim.

Mong the Variety of Holy Writings, whereby the Wisedom and Goodness of God hath made provision for the Instruction and Guidance of Man, who is born as a wild Asse's Colt, Job 11. 12. this Book of Proverbs is a Star not of the least magnitude, having the Quintessence of Solomon's Wisedom in it; who is faid to have a Heart as large as the Sand upon the Sea-shore, in respect of his Understanding in things both Divine and Humane, in which he exceeded all the Wise men of his own and other Generations. And among all the Sayings of this Book, this is one of the most considerable, as directing what way we may demonstrate our Fear of God, which is the beginning of Wisedom; and shun the chiefest of Follies, in despising him: the one, by walking in our Uprightness; the other, by avoiding Perverseness in our ways: as it is expressed in my Text, He that walketh in his Uprightness, feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his Ways. despiseth him.

The Words confift of two Propositions, characteri-

zing the Wisest of men, and the veriest Fools. The sirst have two Marks whereby they are discernible: They fear the Lord; and that appears by their malking in their Uprightness. The other appear to be Fools by their despising of the Lord; and that is manifested by their Perverseness in their Ways.

I shall begin with the

## I. PROPOSITION:

He that walketh in his Uprightness, feareth the Lord. And herein I shall enquire, I. What is this Walking in a man's Uprightness: 2. How this demonstrates the Fear of the Lord: 3. What Advantage accrues to a man that walketh in his Uprightness, and feareth the Lord.

Of these in their order.

I. What it is for a man to walk in his Uprightness.

Walking (in the primitive acception thereof) imports a natural progressive Motion of the Body: and Uprightness is that Position of the Body, according to which it is so placed as not to incline to one hand more then the other, but to be even set between both. But in the Metaphorical sense, in which hundreds of times this Expression is used in Holy Scripture, it signifies the moral Motion of the Mind and Members of a Man, as he is a rational Being, to be regulated by the Law of his Maker. And so it supposet the Actings of the Understanding, Will, Affections, and Members of a man, in an orderly and constant Course, out of a vital spiritual Principle in him, by a certain Rule, from one term of his Motion to another, for the attaining of his End.

Whence it is evident, that as to Bodily Walking there are many things requisite or presupposed; so to the Spiritual Walking of the Soul or Man in his Up-

rightness,

rightness, there belong sundry things, either as presupposed or required, without which he cannot be said to walk in his Uprightness. As it is with our Body, while we live on Earth, there will still be some Motion; Man is born to Labour, as the Sparks fly upward; God hath given to the sons of men sore Travail, to be exercised therewith: so it is also with the Soul, there are stirrings of Thoughts, Desires, which cause elicit Acts of the Will in its Purposes; and imperate Acts, in setting the Members of the Body on work, for avoiding Evil, or obtaining some supposed Good.

And as corporal Motion is not in an instant, but requires Time, more or less: so for the contriving and prosecuting such Designs as the Will pitches upon, the

whole Life of man is imployed.

Likewise as there is in Walking, some Place or Person from which or from whom the Motion begins, and to which or whom it tends, which are called in Philosophy the Terminus à quo, the Bound from whence, and the Terminus ad quem, the Bound to which it is directed: so are there in the moral Actions of the Soul and Members some like Bounds; persons are either turned from God, after Satan, or they are turned from the power of Satan unto God: they either move from or to Heaven or Hell, Life or Death.

And as there is a Way in all Walking of the Body, in which the Motion is performed; Motus eft super immobile, there must be some fixt and settled thing which men ordinarily walk upon; they do not move as Fishes in the Sea, or Birds in the Air, whose Way hath no fixed Path: so it is in mens Walking spiritually; there is a broad Way which leadeth to Destruction, or a narrow Way which leadeth to Life; a Way of Satan's, or a Way of

God's, in which every man walks.

And as there is in man's Walking a vital locomotive

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Principle, which is well or ill ordered according to the Sight and the state of the Members, and such Guidance as is from others Direction; so that sometimes for want of Sight or Light a person stumbles and falls, or by reafon of Mistakes from himself, or Mis-direction of other persons, he errs, and never attains to that which he moves towards; sometimes he prospers in his Motion, feeing his Way aright, heeding it, not fainting, but holding on to the end of his Journey: So it is in mens Spiritual Walking: there is a wrong and a right Principle which moves their Mind and Will; they malk after the Flesh, or after the Spirit; their Way is either Satan's, or God's, his Dictates, or God's Precepts; they malk in Darkness, or in the Light: either they are weary of well-doing, and goe back to Perdition, and turn aside to crooked Ways; or else they discern the Errour of their ways, chuse the Way of Life, goe on with Alacrity and liveliness therein, and persevere to the end.

Also as in Bodily Walking, the Motion is not per Saltum, one Step or Leap doth not begin and end it; but it is progressive, there is Step after Step, one slower, another quicker, one part of the Way is sooner and with less timble and danger passed over then the other: So it is in the Spiritual Walking: the Actings of the Mind and Will are not performed all together, neither the immanent nor transient Acts of a man, whether right or wrong, are done at once; but some one hour, fome another, with various Success, with diversity of Ability, and Speed, and Event, by reason of the Assistence or Hindrance of concurrent Accidents or Causes, which do frequently alter both the Motion and the Consequence of it: such as are the Temptations of Satan, or the Influence of God's Spirit; the Society of evil Company, or the Converse with Godly persons; corrupt Teachers, or holy Pastours; outward estate of Prosperity,

Prosperity, or Adversity; with many other things, which occasion mens Progress to be more or less expedite, either to the better or the worse.

Thus I have fomewhat opened to you what this Walking is in general: It is now farther necessary, that I shew you more specially what is this Walking of a man in his Uprightness, which shews he fears the Lord.

1. For a man who feareth the Lord to walk in his Uprightness, it is necessary that he set his face towards God, that is, that he propound God's Glory, and the obtaining of his Favour, as his End. In all fuch Actions as are rational, it is the End propounded by the Doer which hath a chief fway in the denominating of them good. Finis dat Mediis Amabilitatem. Many brave Exploits done by heroical men onely to immortalize their Names, to spread their Fame, though they were advantageous to the people of their Generation, yet being not acted out of Dutifulness to God as the impulfive, to exalt God as the final Cause, they were but splendida Peccata, glistering Sins, like Gloe-worms, or Wood that feems to shine in the dark, but is nothing else but rotten matter or mere Dirt. He that walks uprightly stoops not down to the Earth, nor pores on his own Cloaths, but looks upwards to something higher then himself, towards Heaven. Pharisees Alms, Fasting, Prayers, though much esteemed by themselves and other men, were not regarded by God, as being done for themselves, not for God. But such Actions as are done without Ostentation, with an eye to God's Approbation, though in fecret, and of no account with men, yet are they in the fight of God of great price; as S. Peter faith (I Pet. 3. 4.) of the hidden man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit. The Rectitude of the Heart is most conducible to a man's upright walking:

king: which emboldned Hezekiah thus to mind God in his Prayer, Isa. 38. 3. Remember now, O Lord, I befeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy light. Which acquaints us with the next Condi-

tion of this Walking;

2. It must be a Walking in God's Ways. It is not enough for him that walks in his Uprightness, that his Intentions be good, but he must also chuse the Paths of Uprightness; he must doe what God requires to be done, and to be done by him. He that ran well, but extra Viam, out of the Way appointed him, beyond his Line, had not the Crown affigned him by the Judges in the Greek Games. Neither hath he the Approbation or Reward of upright Walking, who walks by another Rule then God commands. They that chuse either their own Conceits, or the Tradition of the Elders, or any other humane Authority, for the Square of their Actions, are judged to worship God in vain ; to draw near him with their Mouth, and to honour him with their Lips, but to remove their Heart far from him, whose Fear towards him is taught by the Precepts of men, Ifa. 29. 12. They are such as eye the Dictates of Rabbins, the Decrees of Popes, the Canons of Councils, above or equally with the Precepts of Christ: they make Conscience of the Vow of Corban, not of honouring Father and Mother: they will by no means break the Rules of the Founder of their Order, but scruple not the violating of Christ's Commands. Neither can those be faid to walk in their Uprightness, that make Conscience of keeping one Command, but not of another; that will not swear, yet will lie; that will pray to God, and yet defraud men; that will give Alms, yet adore a Crucifix; that will pay Tith of Mint, Anise and Cumin, and leave the weightier matters of the Law, Righteonsness

ness, Judgment, Faith, and the Love of God; that abbor Idols, yet commit Sacrilege. All upright Walking is copulative, takes in its Walk all God's Commands; it excludes none, but observes all in their due order and place. Then shall I not be ashamed, saith David, (Psal. 119. 6.) when I have respect to all thy Commands. Yet herein there must be heed taken, that we regard each in its proper time. To keep the Sabbath by Rest, to attend the Sacrifice, was a Duty; but not when Mercy was to be shewed. Vice is to be reproved, but in fit season: Sin is to be punished, but by him that is thereto authourized: Sacrifice is to be offered, but by the Priest. He that walks in his Uprightness must not onely look that the thing he does be commanded, but that it be commanded to him. Each must walk in his own Path, in his own Rank, if he will walk in his Uprightness.

3. He that walks in his Uprightness must walk warily, steadily, evenly, constantly; according to that of Solomon, Prov. 4. 25, 26, 27. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine ey-lids look straight before thee. Ponder the Path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from Evil. So faith the Apostle, Eph. 5.15, 16. See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. He that walks in his Uprightness hath his Eyes in his head, to keep his Way; gazeth not about to fatisfie his Curiofity, but minds his Journey, the Way he is to walk in, the Work he is to doe; listens not to feducing Company, that feeks to divert him out of his Path; takes heed of such Offers, such Temptations as may be Stumbling-blocks to him, to cause him to fall; sets his Foot, his Purposes firmly, that he may not flip; looks not back, like Lot's Wife to Sodom, to his former Pleasures. He goes not on weeping, like Fff 2 Phalti.

Phalti, when he restored Michal to David; but like David, with enlarged heart he lifts up his feet to run the way of God's Commands. He is not flothfull, but a diligent follower of them that through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises. He looks to the Cloud of Witnesses that have gone before him, and keeps company with them who confess themselves Pilgrims and Strangers on Earth, and thereby declare plainly that they seek another City, to wit, an heavenly. He casts away every weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset him, that he may with patience run the Race that is set before Such do arm themselves against Encounters of Spiritual Wickednesse, that may rob or spoil them of their Provision for their Journey. They goe on (as David faid of himself, Psal. 71.16.) in the strength of the Lord God. Their Strength is in him, in whose Heart are the ways of them: they goe from Strength to Strength, Pfal. 84. 5, 7. The Joy of the Lord is their Strength; his Love heartens them: the Hope of Glory keeps them from fainting; it is as an Anchor of the Soul, firm and stable, and which entreth into that within the Veil. They look unto Jesus, the Authour and finisher of their Faith, who for the foy that was set before him, endured the Cross. and despised the Shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. They endure Contradiction of Sinners, and refift unto blond, striving against Sin. In a word, Faith in God through Jesus Christ, Joy in the Holy Ghost, Love to Christ, Hope of the Inheritance above, animate them to holy Resolutions of Obedience to God, confirm them against Difficulties, keep them from fainting under any Pressures, till they get to the end of their Journey, and that Rest which is prepared for them that walk uprightly.

II. How this Walking of a man in his Uprightness doth

demonstrate the Fear of the Lord.

Such Walking doth evidently demonstrate the Fear of the Lord (that is, that reverential Regard of God as their Lord and Master, the Supreme Law-giver and Judge, to whom they are subject ) to be the Principle that acts them, and carries them on with vigour to walk. in their Uprightness. For, 1. In that they fet their faces towards God, they shew that their Walking tends to please God, to gain his Approbation; which is the greatest fign of Fear in a Servant to his Master, a Child to his Father, a Subject to his Prince: for in all these Relations it is the Reverence of Superiours which moves the Inferiour to put forth his ability for the Superiour. So it is the Fear of God that moves the upright Walker to glorifie God in his Body and Spirit, which are God's; to present his Body to him as a living Sacrifice in bis reasonable Service; to devote himself to God, and to gratifie him with what Offering he hath, with what Performance he is able to doe. 2. A man's Choice of God's Commands, as his Path, shews his Subjection to him; and that is the greatest proof of an holy Fear of the Divine Majesty. He is a man after God's own heart, who will doe all his Will; as it is faid of David, Act. 13.22. Which is the great Scope of him that walks in his Uprightness; and consequently a proof of his owning God's Sovereignty, and uniting of his Heart to fear his Name. 3. A man's Walking in his Uprightness proceeds from that Faith whereby the Believer presents God to himself, sets him before his face, fees him that is invisible, as Moses did, Heb. 11.27. which begets Fear of God, takes away servile Fear of others, keeps him in even and constant Obedience; as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the Holy Patriarchs, who walked with and before God without Fear of their Enemies, in the Fear of God, depending on his Protection, and fubjecting themselves to his Direction; which engaged the Lord to be their God. III. What

III. What Advantage accrues to him that walketh in his Uprightness, and feareth the Lord. Of which very

briefly.

The Psalmist tells us in few words, Psal. 84.11. that the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield: the Lord will give Grace and Glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psal. 97.11. Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in heart. And after him the Apostle, Gal. 6.16. As many as walk according to the Rule of the new Creature in Christ Jesus, Peace be on them and Mercy, and on the Israel of God. Whence it is rightly inferred, that all such as walk in their Uprightness, out of a Fear of the Lord, are assured of Light to guide them, Protection to preserve them, Peace to quiet them, Supply of good things to chear them, Assistence to help them, Favour to comfort them, and Glory to advance them.

## APPLICATION.

And now what remains, but that each of us (as the Prophet minds the Jews, Hag. 1. 5.) consider our Ways, whether we have chosen the Way that leads to Life, or that which is the Path to Destruction; whether we walk uprightly in the Fear of God, or perversly in Compliance with Satan. All of us have a Journey to goe, here we have no continuing City. We may say as David, I Chron. 29. 15. We are Strangers before God, as were all our Fathers: our days on the Earth are as a Shadow, and there is none abiding, no expectation of a settled Mansion here. We must arise and depart, for this is not our Rest, because it is polluted, Mic. 2. 10.

Oh then how much doth it concern us to heed which Way we take? whether the tendence of our Course of life be to walk in our Uprightness, as those

that

that fear the Lord; or our Conversation be in the Lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the desires of the Flesh and of the Mind: whether we devote our selves to the Fear of God, spend our lives, imploy our time and estate to please him, to doe his Will; or our Walking be according to the course of this World, according to the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh in the chil-

dren of Disobedience.

If you fay you fear God, and expect Heaven; you must manifest it by departing from your sinfull Ways, by serving him in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the days of your life. They must walk before God in their Uprightness here, who would stand before God in Happiness hereafter. Not Words, but Works, not a Form of Godliness, but the Power of it, prevails with God. Be not deceived, faith the Apostle, (Gal. 6. 7, 8.) God is not mocked: for what soever a man soweth, that shall be reap. For he that soweth to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting. Follow therefore Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Walk with that Company here, with which you would have your Lot hereafter. Walk not in the way with them, with whom you dread to be affociated at last. Take heed of Complying with the World in your Life, with whom you would not be condemned at your Death. Confider the End of your Life; and follow their Faith, whose End you would purchase at the greatest rate. Remember the Advice of the Prophet, ferem. 6. 16. Thus faith the Lord, Stand in the ways and fee, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your Souls.

I direct you not to follow any New Lights, neither to feek any new Ways; but I advise you to goe to Christ, that you may find Rest for your Souls; to take

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bis Yoke upon you, and to learn of him; to receive him, and to walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and eftablished in the Faith, as he hath taught you, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Believe in the Light, that ye may be the Children of Light. Walk as Children of Light: and walk as such while you have the Light. Casting off the works of Darkness, and putting on the Armour of Light, walk honestly as in the day; not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envying: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the Lusts thereof. To all which let me adde that of the Apofile, Eph. 5. 1, 2. Be followers of God as dear Children: and walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Amen.

LAUS DEO.

THE

## THE

## IMPIOUS CONTEMPT.

Part II.

# The Twenty-eighth SER MON.

PROVERBS XIV. 2.

But he that is perverse in his Ways, despiseth him.

F all Points of Wisedom, this is the Inlet, and as it were the Door, to fear the Lord: and of all Ways of Folly, this is the greatest, to despise him. The one is demonstrated by a man's walking in his Uprightness, of which I have already spoken: the other, by Perverseness in a man's Ways, which is now to be considered.

#### II. PROPOSITION.

He that is perverse in his Ways, despiseth the Lord. Concerning this three Quære's are to be answered; like as there were in handling the former Proposition.

1. Who is meant by him that is perverse in his Ways, and when a man is said to be so. 2. How such an one despiseth the Lord. 3. What is the Evil of such Despising the Lord. Of which in their order.

I. Who is meant by him that is perverse in his Ways.

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By Ways (as hath been already faid) are meant the Actions of a Man as he is a Rational Being, whose Motions should be ordered by such a Rule as his Creatour hath made known, and should tend to his Maker's Honour. For God at first made Man upright, or simple, so as that he had no other Way but that which was God's: but they have fought out many Inventions, faith Solomon, Eccles. 7.29. Whence it comes to pass, that there are many and various Ways in which men now walk, contrary to God's Way, that is, his prescribed Will; which is the Way that every man should walk in, and then he walketh in his Uprightness. But when he chuseth any Invention of his own to direct the Course of his Actions by, and chiefly when he opposeth God's Will, his Truth, his Precepts, then is he perverse in his Ways. Now this may happen two ways; either out of Ignorance, or wittingly: and this either willingly, or unwillingly; with a pure, or a mixt Will; out of Infirmity, through Fear, Forgetfulness, Heedlesness, or such like Cause as abates much of the Voluntariness of the Action; or obstinately, resolutely, presumptuously, after Conviction, Warning, Reproof, Correction, not onely actually, but also habitually, and incorrigibly, with a high hand and contumacious mind. He that fears the Lord, and walks in his Uprightness, may sometimes actually be perverse in his Ways out of Ignorance. Infirmity, through prevalency of Temptation; and yet not be accounted so perverse in his Ways as to be said to despise the Lord so as Solomon here means. S. Paul at Antioch chargeth S. Peter and S. Barnabas, that they did not walk uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel, Gal. 2. 14. because that S. Peter, before certain came from James, did eat with the Gentiles : but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them of the Circumcision. And the other Jews dis-Cembled

sembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their distinulation. Herein was a kind of Perverseness, out of some Timorousness incident to a holy Saint, and a Pillar among the Apostles, and that in a Point which so much concerned the Truth of the Gospel: and yet there was no such despising of the Lord as Solomon doth here stigmatize. Nor dare I say but that David did that which was not right in the eyes of the Lord, in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, in the business of Ziba, and of Numbring the people; but that he despised the Commandment of the Lord, to doe evil in his fight: yet was he not so perverse in his Ways as to despise the Lord so as here is meant, because it was not done obstinately, impenitently, habitually. But Eli's Sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who caused men to abhor the Offerings of the Lord, and persisted in their Sin, after their Father Eli's Admonition, were obstinately, habitually perverse in their Ways, and despised the Lord: I Sam. 2. 17, 25, 29. In like manner all fuch are perverse in their Ways, and despise the Lord fo as Solomon here means, who do stubbornly and impenitently perfift in any finfull Errour, or wicked Practice against the Law of God, or the Gospel of Christ, either not relinquishing the one after Discovery, or not amending the other after Reproof; but upholding the one, and continuing in the other, against the Warnings of God and Man.

Of such Perverseness of men in their Ways there are many Degrees, according to the several kinds of Warnings given them, the Frequency of their Actings, the Stifness and Stubbornness of their Wills, the Proceedings of their Practices, the Excellency of God's Will which they bend themselves against, and the Engage-

ments they have to conform to it.

Sometimes the Lord warns men of the Evil of their

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ways by the Reproof of an Enemy: and it is Wisedom to make use of it for our Amendment. Even Plutarch hath a Treatise directing a man How to get good by an Enemie's ill will: this is to make Mithridate out of Poifon. Sometimes a Friend shews us our Evil: and then it is great Perverseness to persist in it. Sometimes an authourized Pastour, a Parent, a Yoke-fellow, admonishes with due Correction; and yet persons continue obstinate. Sometimes God fends Warnings by his Prophets: as he did to the Ifraelites, 2 Chron. 36. 15, 16. He fent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending them, because he had Compassion on his people: But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his words. and misused his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no Remedy. Sometimes he warns men by his Judgments, either on themfelves, or on others; expecting that when his Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the world should learn Righteonsness, Isa. 26. 9. Yet though they be iterated, varied, be very conspicuous and terrible, men return not to the Lord; as the Prophet complains, Amos 4. 11. Yea, they are so far from being bettered by God's Judgments, that, as it is faid Rev. 16.11. some blaspheme the God of Heaven because of their Pains and their Sores, and repent not of their deeds. Yea, so far are God's Judgments or Mercies from turning men from their Sins, that oftentimes they multiply Abominations the more: which shews extreme Perverseness. The same may be faid of them that abuse God's Patience and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God should lead them to Repentance; as the Apostle speaks Rom. 2.4. And of those that, because Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore their Heart is fully set in them to doe evil, Eccles. 8. 11.

And according to this Stifness of their Wills, there

are Degrees of Perverseness in their Practices. For some (as the Prophet chargeth the Tews, Zach. 7. 11.) refuse to hearken, pull away the Shoulder, stop their Ears that they should not hear. Yea, ( faith he, vers. 12.) they made their Heart as an Adamant-Stone, lest they should hear the Lord, and the words which the Lord of hoasts fent in his Spirit by the Prophets: therefore a great Wrath came from the Lord of hoasts. Some shut their Eyes against the Light in them by their vicious Affections; darken the Light of their natural Conscience, and are given over to a reprobate Sense. Many hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, after it is made known to them, Rom. 1.18. and not onely yield not to it, but also wrangle and cavil against it. Yea, there are not a few, who, in stead of being altered by any Denunciations of Judgments from God, or Convictions of his Law, turn the very Speeches of the Prophets and Preachers that are fent to them into proverbial Scoffs: as those that scornfully said, Let him make speed, and hasten his Work, that we may see it: and let the Counsel of the Holy one of Israel drawnigh and come, that we may know it, Isa.5. 19. And those that tauntingly took up the Prophet's term of the Burthen of the Lord, Jer. 23. 38. To what height of profane Impudence, and Perverseness in their Ways, are they come, who (as if they counted it their Bravery ) abuse the very words of Holy Scripture, even of Christ himself, in their Discourses and foolish Jests, ( though by themselves and those like them counted witty, ) to make themselves sport, and render them ridiculous? who, as if it were a part of Gallantry to provoke the God of Heaven, glory in their outrageous Swearing, and direfull Imprecations against themselves? Others there are like Elymas the Sorcerer, whom S. Paul (Act. 13. 10.) terms a man full of all Subtlety and all Mischief, a Child of the Devil, Enemy of all RighRighteousness, who ceased not to pervert the right ways of the Lord, in seeking to turn away the Deputy, Sergius Paulus, from the Faith of Christ. To whom those are near of kin of whom S.Paul speaks, in his Farewell-Sermon to the Ephesians, Act. 20.29, 30. I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous Wolves enter in amongst you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away Disci-

ples after them.

All which perverse Proceedings are much aggravated by the Opposition in them not onely to the Law, but also to the Gospel. For, as the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, in that it is not subject to the Law of God, Rom. 8. 7. so it is much greater Perverseness in a man's Ways, to neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will, Heb. 2. 3, 4. And therefore our Saviour faith, 70h. 3. 19. This is the Condemnation, (per Eminentiam, the great Condemnation, ) that Light is come into the World, and men loved Darkness rather then Light, because their deeds were evil. It is also so much the greater Perverseness, and renders it incurable, unpardonable, for men, after their profession of the Truth, after Vows to God of adhering to Christ, after they have been once enlightned, have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come, then to fall away, so that they crucifie the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, Heb. 6.5, 6. This is the most contumelious way of Despiling the Lord, among all the forts and degrees of Perverseness in our Ways; as may be discerned in answering the Second II. How Quære,

Sermon XXVIII. The Impious Contempt.

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II. How he that is perverse in his Ways despiseth the Lord.

Despising, faith Aristotle, (in the Second of his Rhetoricks, in the Chapter of Anger, ) is the Act of Opinion in not shewing any regard of a thing or person. And it hath its Effects in divers degrees. Sometimes there is onely Slighting, making none or little Esteem of either. Sometimes Damnifying, daring to harm; because there is so mean a Thought thereof, as not to fear any Revenge. Sometimes there is insolent Scorning thereof, as of no value. And in all these degrees a perfon is despised, when the Contempt is offered either immediately or directly, as when a King is reviled to his face, his Person kicked, spurned, derided openly: or mediately, when any fuch Usage is shewed to that which doth more peculiarly pertain to his Dignity; as when his Image, Coin, Laws, Son, Friends, Servants, Officers, Embassadours, are vilified or abused. The Contempt of whom though it be first terminated on them; yet when it is offered for the King's fake, out of Enmity to or Disesteem of him, or Affront to his Government, the Relation to him being known, it is either actually, or by interpretation, a Despising of the King himself. Now, (as the Prophet Malachi hath it, 1. 14. ) I am a great King, faith the Lord of hoafts, and my Name is dreadfull among the Heathens. He is the true God, the living God, and an everlasting King, Jer. 10. 10. There is none like unto him; he is Great, and his Name is great in might, vers. 6. According as his Name is glorious and fearfull, Deut. 28.58. so are all the things pertaining to his Essence and to his Greatness: there is some Reverence due to them. And God is despised, not onely when he is disclaimed, as he was by Pharaoh, Exod. 5. 2. or not minded, as by those wicked ones, who through the Pride of their countenance Hhh

will not seek after God, God is not in all their thoughts, Psal. 10. 4. or when he is reproached and blasphemed, as he was by Rabshakeh, Isa. 36. 20. or when his Worship is neglected, as it was Mal. 1. 6, 7. or his Providence denied, as when it was asked, Where is the God of Judgment? Malach. 2. 17. But also when his Works are undervalued. He that mocketh the Poor, reproacheth his Maker, faith Solomon, Prov. 17.5. Specially when his Children are despised. He that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit, 1 Thess. 4. 8. In like manner, to slight God's Laws, his Threatnings, his Judgments, is an high Contempt of God. But God is most of all despised, when the Gospel, the Grace of God in Christ, the Embassadours that bring it, the Son of God himself, the Image of the invifible God, are contemned, and the Spirit of God despighted. He that despiseth you, despiseth me, faith Christ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me, Luk.10. 16. And in this respect he that is perverse in his Ways despiseth the Lord, because he despiseth God's Commands. his Gospel, his Messengers; but most of all, his Son, in whom he is well pleased, and his Spirit of Grace, the chiefest of all the Gifts that he communicates unto men. Whence may be discerned

III. What is the Evil of such Despising of the Lord.

Of which in a word.

All Indignities offered to a King are high Misdemeanours: to rebell against his Crown, to speak evil of his Person, are Crimina lase Majestatis, amount to High Treason, and are usually avenged by the most shamefull and tormenting Death. Doubtless the Perverseness of his Spirit who is obstinate in his Ways, and despiseth God's Statutes and his Judgments, is no less High Treason against the Heavenly Majesty, his Crown and Dignity; chiefly when his Grace is rejected, his Son

is not kiffed, his Spirit is despighted: there being no greater Affront to him, who is the bleffed and onely Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, then when his Grace in Christ is rejected, when men will not have Christ to rule over them, but prefer the Prince of this World before the Lord of Glory, the Prince of Life; and in flead of welcoming the Spirit of Life, embrace the accurfed Fiend, the Authour of Death. This makes the Wrath of God hot, so that they perish from the way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little, Pfal. 2. 12. Such men make God a Liar, I Joh. 5. 10. And that doth in effect un-God him, and dethrone him. By despising the Riches of his Goodness, after their impenitent hard Heart, they treasure up to themselves Wrath against the day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, Rom. 2.4,5. Which can be no less then fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries, who tread under foot the Bloud of the Son of God, count the Bloud of the Covenant, wherewith persons are sanctified, an unholy thing, and doe despight to the Spirit of Grace, Heb. 10. 27, 29.

## APPLICATION.

Oh that these things were seriously pondered and laid to heart by you. How many thousands of holy Monitions, to turn from your evil Ways, have some of you had? How often hath God spoken to you by his Judgments from Heaven on your selves, or others? How often hath Christ stood at the door of your Souls, and knocked, that he might be let in, that he might sup with you, and you with him? How frequently have the Preachers of the Gospel, the Servants of Christ, invited you to his Supper, to be partakers of that Grace of God which exceeds in worth all the Treasures of the H h h 2

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Earth, all the Pleasures under the Sun; which is of greater Necessity and Advantage then all the Traffick by Land or Sea? and yet his Word is not believed; Oxen and Farms and Wives, yea (that which is worse) Dalilah's, Idols are minded, more esteemed then Christ, then his Love, his Spirit, his Kingdome, his Righteousness.

Where is the man that is willing to deny himself, his own Contents, unjust Gains, unclean Affections, injurious Projects, yea his vain Opinions, and to take up Christ's Cross after him? Where is he that will suffer, will not say Loss of Life, or Goods, or Credit with ren, for Christ, but, even a Divorce from his Lusts? That will sorbear a profane ungodly Oath, a devillish Revenge, or undergoe so much as a Scoff or Reproach, that he may sollow Christ, and be his Disciple? If this be not Perverseness in our Ways, the Despising of the Lord in the most vilisying way, I know not what is.

I befeech you, bethink your felves in good earnest what will be the End of these things. Think of that Wisedom Solomon speaks of Prov. 1. v. 22. and so forwards. The very reading of it, methinks, should awaken and affright as many of you as yet persist in your Perverseness, and will none of Wisedom's Counsel, but despise all its Reproof. As therefore you would not be rejected by Christ, despised by him in that Day when he shall bid some depart from him into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; deny, I besech you, your Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, obey the voice of Christ, trust in him: and he will then receive you, and ye shall be where he is. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

#### THE

# Future Glory.

# The Twenty-ninth SER MON.

REVEL. vij. 15.

Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and ferve him day and night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.

Appy and glorious Spectacle which humane spirits are capable of. Brave Shows (as at Princes Coronations and Marriages) do greatly attract the Eyes of men. One of the ancient Fathers wished much to see a Roman Triumph in its greatest Glory. The Queen of Sheba was so affected with the Glory of Solomon and his Court, that she took a great and costly Journey to behold them; and was so transported with what she saw and heard, that there was no more Spirit in her.

But I may well fay, A Greater then Solomon, a braver Sight then Solomon's Court, or a Roman Triumph, is here. Here is the God of Glory on his Throne. Here H h h?

the Court of glorious Spirits which are made perfect, have their most splendid Robes on, and the Ensign of their Victory in their hands: that Palma nobilis which carries to God the Offscouring of the Earth; and makes them, that hid themselves in Dens and Caves of the Earth, to be advanced to the Habitation of God in the

highest Heavens.

And therefore this Show is worth your beholding: which I shall endeavour to present to you, though not in its Splendour, yet so as I hope it may raise you up, as to an Admiration and Extolling of the Divine Excellency, so also to an Imitation of and a Following after those glorious Saints, of whom it is said in the Verse before my Text, that they came out of great Tribulation, and washed their Robes and made them white in the Bloud of the Lamb: and in this Verse, Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.

In which two Verses you have described,

I. The Exploits and Estate of these noble Warriours or Combatants on Earth. They had a great Fight of Afflictions: They wrastled not onely against Flesh and Blond; but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this world, against Spiritual Wickedness in high, or heavenly, places: And though they had sore Falls, yet they washed their Robes and made them white in the Blond of the Lamb; and by the word of their Testimony at last they overcame Satan, and the World, not loving their Lives unto the death. This was their gallant Fight of Faith; this their glorious Victory over their proud and most treacherous Enemies.

2. Their Triumph, their Ascent into the Capitol, their Reception into Heaven: They are before the

Sermon XXIX. The Saints future Glorv.

Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple; and he that litteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.

Their present State there may be seen in these Particulars.

I. In the place where they are, they do not, as they did on Earth, mander about in Defarts and Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the earth; but are about the Throne of God. Nor are they cloathed with Sheep-skins and Goat-skins; but have Royal or Priestly Robes. like the Servants of Solomon about his Throne, or the Priests in their Garments at the Altar or in the Temple.

2. Their Imployment is not to grind in Mills, or make Brick under a cruel Pharaoh: but, like the Priests and Levites at the Temple, they day and night serve the Great, the Glorious and Bleffed Potentate, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who onely hath Immortal lity, and dwelleth in Light incomprehensible. And their Service is the most pleasant, and without any Tedious-

3. Their Company is not base, fordid and vexing Men; or malicious and cruel Devils: but he that fitteth on the Throne, the King of Glory, who hath all Beauty and Loveliness; who will dwell among them, so as to protect them, and fatisfie them with his Presence.

ness, to wit, to praise and magnifie him everlastingly.

I shall not have time to insist upon the description of the Conflict and Atchievement of these Blessed Saints when upon Earth: though the particle [Therefore,] referring thither, might induce me to confider thereof. Nor is it necessary to inquire into the Time of that great Affliction which these are said to come out of. I will (without limitation of it to one fort of Saints, as Martyrs, at one time, whether in the Ten first great Persecutions under the Pagan Roman Emperours, or

those

those under the bloudy Roman Popes by Burnings and most cruel Massacres) apply this to all Saints; and

thence observe.

1. That Afflictions, Persecutions, yea Death, do not extinguish the Being of Saints, who wash their Robes and make them clean in the Bloud of the Lamb.

2. That when they are removed from Men below,

they are placed before the Throne of God.

3. That there they serve God in his Temple in Hea-

ven perpetually.

4. That they have God everlastingly cohabiting with them.

Of which in their order.

## I. OBSERVATION.

That Afflictions, Persecutions, yea Death, do not extinguish the Being of Saints, who wash their Robes and make

them clean in the Bloud of the Lamb.

It is the saying of our Lord to Martha, Joh. 11. 26. Whosever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. It is true, that believing Lazarus, her Brother, was then in the Grave, and had been dead (to her apprehension) four days, insomuch that she made no other account of him but as of a putressed stinking Carkase: yet even then Christ avoucheth him to have been alive. And in like manner he judged Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, though buried many Ages before, yet even then when he conversed on Earth to be alive, and so to continue for ever. God being their God, and he not being a God of the dead, but of the living, they must by consequence live unto him: Luk. 20. 38.

Be the Diffolution of the Bodies from the Souls of the Saints never so violent, their Flesh and Bones never so much consumed by the most vehement Flames, torn and devoured by the most greedy and ravenous Beasts, be they never so much putressed and wasted with Sickness; yet in their Dust and Ashes there is a Seed of Life. It is with their Reliques as it is with Seed that is sown, which though it be buried under the clods of the Earth, and in appearance to men annihilated; yet hath it a seminal Life, which shall spring up again and slourish. This Job was assured of, when he said, Job 19. 26, 27. Though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another; though my Reins be consumed within me.

But this is not all: The Spirits of men, even when their Bodies have onely a seminal Life, have an actual Life; they have a Life of Sense and Understanding: they neither have their Life extinguished, nor laid asserting without Feeling or Cogitation. Though the Dust return to the Earth as it was, yet the Spirit returns to

God that gave it.

The Spirits that were sometimes disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the-days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing, were in prison when S. Peter wrote: I Epist. 3. 19,20. And it is the saying of the Authour to the Hebrews, Chap. 12. 23. Ye are come to

the Spirits of Just men made perfect.

When Lazarus was raised from the Grave, he had not a new Soul created which was not existent before, but the same Soul brought back into his Body. Neither at the Resurrection are other Souls joyned to the Bodies, then those that before had lived in them. For otherwise, not the same Soul which had done good or evil should be rewarded, but another. When (AF. 7. 59.) S. Stephen called upon God, and said, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit, he, being full of the Holy Ghost, was assured, that though his Body were buried, yet his Spi-

rit should be with Christ. And when the Apostle Paul expressed his willingness to be absent from the Body; yet his expectation was, to be present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5.8. It was his choice and option, to depart, and to be with Christ, as being far better, Phil. 1.23. He had learned, that Christ was in Death Life, that he that believeth on him hath everlasting Life, that his Life was hid with Christ in God, that the Spirit of God that dwelt in him was Life, because of Righteonsness; and therefore he counted not himself to live, but Christ in him.

And as Christ did commend his Spirit into the hands of his Father, when he gave up the ghost, being assured he should be in Paradise: so doe all the Saints that have the Spirit of Christ; even when they lie down in their beds of Earth, they yield up their Spirits into the hands of their Father, as assured to be with Christ, who is the Way to the Father. And this brings in the

### II. OBSERVATION.

That when Saints are removed from Men below, they

are placed before the Throne of God.

Though God be a Spirit, dwelling in that Light unto which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: yet the Holy Scriptures express him to us under the Similitude of a glorious King, suppose a Solomon in all his Glory, sitting on a Throne or Seat of Royal Majesty, and that in the Heaven of Heavens; where his Son, termed the Lamb in this Chap. vers. 9, 10. hath his Throne also at the right hand of God; for being ascended into the Most holy place, as an high Priest, he is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, Heb. 8.1. There the Angels, who are ministring Spirits unto him, and the Elders, all the Aposses, Prophets, Martyrs, Consessours, as Kings and Priests

# Sermon XXIX. The Saints future Glory.

Priests unto God, stand round about the Throne, attending upon and beholding the King of Glory; the number of whom is faid, Revel. 5. 11. to be ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Now this place is by Christ termed Paradise, Luk. 23. 43. and by S. Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 2, 4. faid to be the third Heaven, where is a place of Rest, an Abraham's Bosome, into which Lazarus is faid to be carried by the Angels, Luk. 16. 22.

Now though that were a great Happiness, for a Beggar, that lately lay at the Rich man's gate full of Sores, and empty of Bread, glad to have been fed with the crums which fell from the rich man's Table, as the Dogs were, who had more Compassion then the rich man; for they licked his Sores, when the rich man disdained to look on him, or to pay for his Cure: And though it be to all that undergoe fore Travail, great Wants and Persecutions, a very great part of their Blessedness, that there remains a Rest for the people of God, Heb. 4. 9; and to the Saints which keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus, after their patient Sufferings, that a Voice from Heaven is heard, Saying, Write, Bleffed are the dead which die in, or for, the Lord from henceforth, Yea, faith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours: Yet that is not the total Summe which completes their Felicity; there is more in that which follows, that their Works follow them, so as to be approved in Heaven. Their Persons are welcomed, and entertained with Triumph over their Enemies: they have the Crown of Righteousness conferred on them by the Righteous Judge of all the World : their good Fight of Faith is applauded with an Io-Triumph, as an Heroical act of the most gallant Fortitude, by the Acclamation of the Celestial Quire of Angels and blessed Spirits: they are cloathed with white Linen, the Righteoufness

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ness of Saints; they are arrayed with the most sumptuous Apparel; feasted with the Light of God's Countenance; reign with Christ on his Throne; are designed to be solemnly married to Christ, and to be Judges of the World, as Co-assessor with Christ, at his Coming: in the expectation of which they most delightfully see God, as being before his Throne, and there serving him for ever. Which brings us to the

### III. OBSERVATION.

That the Saints serve God in his Temple in Heaven

perpetually.

The Service of a great and gracious Prince, though but in the meanest Office about him, is an Employment much sought after, for the Advantages it brings of Safety, free Acces, Esteem, and other Privileges concomitant: but to attend him in a higher quality is still more desirable, for the Dignity and Nearness of it to such a Majesty. David chose rather to be a Door-keeper in the Honse of God, then to be as Haman, the great Favourite in the Palace of Shushan with Abasuerus King of Persia.

Yet these are but petty and low Advantages in comparison of what accrue by the Service of the Great God, who filleth Heaven and Earth. Surely it was a Happiness to be a Servant to God, though but a Hewer of wood, or a Drawer of water, for the House of God, as the Gibeonites were: they were yet far more blessed that dwelt in his House, as Priests and Levites, to minister before him, and to serve at his Altar: but it is superlative Happiness to serve God in his Temple in Heaven, and to doe this for ever without any intermission; especially when the Service is no other then Service of Gratitude, and Praising of the Great Creatour and Benefactour of the world, even him who is Optimus

as well as Maximus, the Best of Beings as well as the Greatest; even him who is the Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh, in whom is no

Variableness, nor shadow of turning.

They that are still praising God on Earth are bleffed. Psal. 84. 4. As all God's Works do praise the Lord; so his Saints do bless him: they shew forth the Glory of his Kingdom, and talk of his Power, Pfalm 145. 10, 11. Much more joyous and bleffed a thing is it when the great Confort of Heaven do there perpetually found forth the high Praises of their God; where they have nothing else to doe but to sing, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto him that litteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever; where this New Song is fung with the best Musick of Heaven. concerning the Lord Jesus, Thou art worthy of all Benediction, for thou wast stain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blond, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests; and where with a loud voice, with the greatest Shout of Angels and glorified Saints, this Acknowledgment is echoed forth, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisedom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleffing.

Oh how glad are men to tell of the Good they have received by such and such Benefactours? If a gracious Prince hath but admitted them to kis his Hands, hath deigned to speak kindly to them, to promise them Preferment at Court; how do men, like Haman, tell their Wives and Friends of it with rejoycing? how highly do they esteem themselves? what Regard do they expect from others? how do they please themselves in the expectation of his Performance? how thankfully do they receive any Intelligence of him, any Message from him? And yet it often falls out, that Princes Favourites

30 The Saints future Glory. Sermon XXIX.

be, as a wife Heathen faid, like Counters; which one day stand for pounds, another day are of no value. So that, perhaps, whom they magnified to day, him they will curse to morrow: whom they gloried in one

day, him they are displeased at the next.

It is otherwise with the Saints in Heaven then with Courtiers on Earth. Once in God's Favour, and they never lose it. They have no fear of Frowns, when once before him in his Temple; they have no occasion of Dislike at any of his Looks or Speeches. There is all Serenity of Aspect, Entertainment with perfect Friendship, matter of eternal Love, everlasting Preferment.

And therefore with the greatest Freeness and Chearfulness, without Intermission or Weariness, the Saints do serve God in their Hymns in Heaven, and that in his Presence; for he that sitteth on the Throne doth dwell among them. Which was my last Observation, and is now to be considered, as the Top of all their Happiness, securing it from all Loss, Disturbance, or Diminution.

### IV. OBSERVATION.

That the Saints have God everlastingly cohabiting with them.

Among the Promises and Preferments which are by God bestowed on his Servants, this is the chiefest, That as they are his Jewells, a peculiar people to him; are as lively Stones built up a spiritual House, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ: so they become the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my People, 2 Cor. 6. 16.

The

The Presence of God is counted so necessary to his People, that Moses had rather stay in the vast howling Wilderness, among siery stinging Serpents, then goe onward toward Canaan without it, Exod. 33. 15. On the other side, the Psalmist professeth, that though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, he would fear no evill; because God was with him, his Rod and

his Staff did confort him, Pfal. 23. 4.

And indeed the chiefest Joy of Christians, as well as Safety, is in God's Company. When God hides his Face, the holiest Souls are troubled: Satan affrights them, the men of the World vex them; their own Consciences bring their Sins to remembrance, and cause Gripings and Pain in their very Bowells. But when God returns, when all the Clouds and Storms are dispersed; Blessed, saith the Psalmist, is the people that know the joyfull sound: they shall malk, O Lord, in the

light of thy Countenance, Pfal. 89. 15.

How much do Holy Saints here disquiet themselves by reason of their Cohabitation with prosane and unrighteous persons? When they are so a Sword in their bines, when reproachfully they say daily to them, Where is thy God? How do they long for the Christian Society of sincere Believers and heavenly-minded Christians? But their chief Prayer is, Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon us. Their Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall we come and appear before God? A wise and single-hearted Companion is justly valued as a most precious Jewell: As Ointment and Persume rejoyce the Heart, so doth such Acquaintance a man's Spirit.

But the best of men are imperfect, the purest Churches have their Spots, Christ's own Disciples had a Judas with them. They are not quite free from Satan's

Haunts,

Haunts, till they be where Christ is. But when they behold his Glory, are in the Company of the Lamb, where he is, are in the House where their Father in Heaven dwells, have him dwelling with them, so as that they behold his Face, and are in his Hand; then they are filled with everlasting Joy, abundantly satisfied with the Bread of Life, drink of the River of his Pleasures, with whom is the Fountain of Life, and in his Light they see Light: they find in God's Presence there is Fulness of Joy, and at his right hand Pleasures for evermore.

### APPLICATION.

And thus have I presented unto you a Shadow of that most desirable Light which is the Inheritance of all the Saints. A comprehensive View of which is not attainable, (except there be afforded such a Sight as was to the Three Disciples at Christ's Transsiguration in the Mount, or to S. Paul at his Rapture into Paradise,) till we be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord: and then we shall behold his Face in Righteousness; and when we awake, shall be satisfied with his Likeness.

In the mean time, while we walk by Faith, and not by Sight, let us be such in our Choice, in our Affections, in our Endeavours, as the Saints have been, with Patience waiting for what we see not, and running so as that we may attain it. This will be our Comfort, our Support when we come to the end of our Race, that we have not run for a corruptible Crown, but an incorruptible: that we have not contended for an Earthly Portion with the men of this World, but for an Inheritance laid up in Heaven for us: that we have, as the Saints have done, parted with all to buy this Pearl; laid up our Treasure, not in Earth, but in Heaven; negotiated to be rich towards God, and not to have Treasure here onely for our selves.

You that would be before the Throne of God, must wash your Robes in the Blond of the Lamb, keep your Garments clean, have your Conversation such as becometh the Gospel: you must cast off the Works of Darkness, and put on the Armour of Light: walk honestly, or decently, as in the day, as Children of Light; not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the Lusts thereof.

Dream not that you can ferve Sin here, and yet ferve God before his Throne in his Temple: that God will walk with you, and dwell with you, if you yield your Members as Weapons of Unrighteousness unto Sin: that, if you affect the Ways of Sinners, walk in the Counsel of the Ungodly, sit in the Seat of the Scornfull, and joyn with the Congregation of Evil-doers, you shall at last have your

Portion with the Saints.

Apply then your time and studies and abilities to purific your selves as God is pure, if you hope to see him as he is. And notwithstanding all the Sufferings and Opposition you may meet with, with Patience possess your Souls. Let this animate and strengthen your Hearts against Fainting and Backsliding, that if you suffer with Christ, you shall also reign with him. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

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### THE

# PATRIARCH'S JOY.

# The Thirtieth SER MON.

Jони viij. 56.

Tour Father Abraham rejoyced to see my Day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Mong other Sufferings which Christ underwent, the Antilogy, that is, the Contradiction of Sinners, (the Controversie which he had with cavilling and perverse Opponents or Disputers against his Sayings,) was not the least: which therefore Heb. 12.3. is propounded to us to analogize, that is, consider and ponder upon; that we may not faint or be tired in our spirits, when we meet with such wrangling Gainsayers.

In this Chapter we have a Specimen of such Sophistry in the Jews, who exercised Christ with their perverse Arguings, to the intent they might hinder the Reception of his Testimony of himself, and the Doctrine which he was sent to teach them, which he terms the Truth, vers. 32. that would make them free. This they disdainfully except against, as glorying that they were Abraham's Seed, never in Bondage; and therefore scorned his offer of Freedom.

To both which our Saviour replies, refuting their K k k 2

vain Brags of their being Abraham's Seed, and free in reference to men; fith they were the Servants of Sin, and utterly unlike to Abraham in their Spirits, who was far otherwise affected towards him then they were: For, saith he, Your Father Abraham rejoyced to see my Day: and he saw it, and was glad; whereas my Day is that which you spurn against, as galling and vexing your Spirits.

To understand which, it is requisite that I unfold,

I. What is meant by Christ's Day.

2. How Abraham is said to be their Father; whereas vers. 39. Christ had said, If ye were Abraham's Children, ye would doe the works of Abraham: which imports they were not.

3. How Abraham is faid to have rejoyced to see

Christ's Day.

4. How it was true that he fam it.

5. What matter of Rejoycing this was to him; and

how he was glad in fuch feeing.

1. Concerning the First; It is agreed on by most, that the Day of Christ here is meant of his Advent, or Coming in the Flesh, which we at present celebrate. Though some refer it more specially to his Passion or Suffering. But the Jews understood it of his Birth, and the Space of his Life on Earth, which usually is termed a Man's Day in the Hebrew expression; and in respect of Christ, the Days of his sless, Heb. 5.7.

2. As for the Second; He terms Abraham their Father, as they gloried, by way of Concession, acknowledging them, vers. 37. to be Abraham's Seed by natural Generation: But yet he denies them to be Abraham's Seed in respect of their Minds and Spirits; there being so great a Dissimilitude and Contrariety betwixt them and him therein, that they were more truly begotten of the Devil, whom in Lying and Cruelty they so much resembled.

3. As for the Third; The word rendred [Rejoycing] fignifies such a Joy as is accompanied with Leaping or other Gesticulation, as when a man is superlatively affected with a thing which he hopes for, hath some tidings and assurance of its suturity, and apprehends it as a Beatitude.

And it is conceived Abraham thus rejoyced, when, upon God's Promise of Sarah's Conception, and the Blessing consequent thereupon, (wherein Christ's Coming was included,) he fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a Child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? Which was spoken by him, not dubitative, by way of Doubting, (for the contrary is asserted Rom. 4. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.) but out of Admiration, as over-joyed at the news.

So it is said of John Baptist in the Womb, that at the presence of Christ's Mother, and her Salutation, the Babe leaped, or skipped in exultation, for Joy, in the

Womb of his Mother.

4. As for the Fourth Quære; It is true, there be that understand the Seeing of Abraham, of his beholding of Christ, when with two Angels he appeared to Abraham in a Humane shape; and Abraham saw him eat, and talked with him, as with the Judge of all the Earth: which was consequent upon the desire he had to see him, after the Revelation made to him Gen. 12. 2, 3: and Gen. 15. 5. and his Exultation thereupon, Gen. 17. 16, 17. Which is far more likely to be meant, then his seeing him in the Type of Isaac to be offered, or a Manisestation of the time of his Coming to Abraham being dead.

But if the sense be of Intellectual Seeing, it may be understood of a Seeing by Revelation or Vision; by such an Apparition as might be peculiar to Abraham,

Kkk 3

and not common to those many Prophets, Kings, and Righteous men, to whom it was denied to see those things which the Apostles saw, and to bear those things which

they beard, Matth. 13. 17. Luk. 10. 24.

Sure, as Abraham's Faith was singular, (whereupon he had the denomination of the Father of Believers;) so the Manisestation of Christ to him, what-ever it was, had a Peculiarity in respect of Prophets, Kings, and Righteous men. And therefore both in Mary's Magnificat, and in Zachary's Benedictus, the Performance of God's Promise is said to be, as he spake to Abraham, and, according to the Oath which he sware to our Father Abraham.

5. As for the Last; This Seeing of Christ's Day, (whether it were Ocular or Intellectual,) proper to Abraham, was matter of great Joy to Abraham in a more eminent manner then to others: both in that he faw that Seed which was in special manner his, not onely because it descended from him, (for so it was also David's Seed,) but because it was to come of Sarah in a supernatural way; and also that in this Seed, and so in him, all the Nations of the Earth should be bleffed, and be himself should be a Blessing, Gen. 12. 2. Which therefore produced (if not for the kind, yet for the degree,) a fingular Rejoycing in Abraham: fuch as shewed it felf, not onely in so ready a following God whitherfoever he called him; (a free choice of such an Estate of being as God allotted him; ) but also in that unparallel'd Offering up Isaac, when he was tried, the great effect of his Faith, as it is determined to have been. Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19.

Having thus opened the Meaning of this Speech of Christ, that I may accommodate it to this present Time and Occasion, of celebrating the Memorial of Christ's

Advent, we may hence observe,

I. That

1. That the Day of Christ, or his Coming in the Flesh, was foreknown to Abraham, and other Holy Believers which preceded his Incarnation.

2. That it was that which they desired and waited

for.

3. That the Certainty of its Accomplishment was the Spring of their Joy, the Basis of their Comfort, the Stay and Support of their Spirits in the days of their Pilgrimage on Earth.

Of which I shall speak in order.

### I. OBSERVATION.

That the Day of Christ, or his Coming in the Flesh, was foreknown to Abraham, and other Holy Believers which

preceded his Incarnation.

This is told us in Mary's Song, that God remembred his Mercy, as be spake to the Fathers; and in Zachary's Hymn, as he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets which have been fince the world began. Both to Holy Prophets and to Angels, some, though obscure, Predictions and Foreshewings of Christ's Day were vouchsafed: as those words of Faceb, about the Coming of Shilo, and the Gathering of the people to him, shew, Gen. 49. 10. those also of Moses, Exod. 4. 13. when, to decline the Expedition God imployed him in to Egypt, he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of Him whom thou wilt fend; likewife the many Passages in the Pfalms and Prophets which were opened and explained by our Lord Christ. All these, I say, shew that there were some, though obscure, Foretellings of Christ's Day.

And indeed, that there should be a Day of Christ, was made known to Simeon, to whom it was revealed by the Holy Ghest, that he should not see Death, before

he had seen the Lord's Christ, Luk. 2. 26. To Anna a Prophetess, who, upon Christ's Presenting at the Temple, gave Thanks likewife, as Simeon did, unto the Lord, and spake of Jesus Christ to all them that looked for Redemption in ferusalem, vers. 38. Even the chief Priests and Scribes of the people knew that Christ should be born in Bethlehem of Judea, Matth. 2. 4, 5. man of Samaria said to the Lord Jesus, Joh. 4. 25. I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Yea the Magi or Wife men of the East had intimation of his Birth, and were led to him by a Star, Matth. 2. 1, 2. Even Suetonius, in his History of Vespasian's Life, tells us, that toto Oriente percrebuit sermo, throughout all the East there was frequent speech of a Ruler that should come out from Judga: which was misapplied to Vespasian; yet thereby the Foreknowledge of Christ's Day is manifest to have been far spred, which caused the Desire and Expectation thereof in those Holy Believers who preceded Christ's Incarnation. Which is the next thing to be confidered.

#### II. OBSERVATION.

That this Day of Christ was by Believers of old desired

and waited for.

If the words of Jacob, Gen. 49. 18. I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord, do not intimate his Desire and Expectation of Christ's Day: yet that Speech in the last words of David, 2 Sam. 23. 5. (God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire,) doth express it to have been his; since there is no other thing but the Day of Christ, promised to come from him, that could be truly said to be all his Salvation, and all his Desire.

As

As the Prophet Isaiah foretold, that there should come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch should grow out of his Roots, Isa. 11. 1. and the Prophet Micah, Mic. 5. 2. that the Messiah, who was to be Ruler in Israel, should come forth of Bethlehem, whose Goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting: So it was consessedly expected even by the chief Priests and Scribes of the people. And of him it is said, (Mal. 3. 1.) The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come: and this soon after his Messenger that he sent was come to prepare his Way before him; which to be meant of John the Baptist is expressly declared Mark 1. 2.

And that I may not be too copious in alleging Texts for proof of this; even the Jews, profest Enemies to Christ, deny it not to have been true, That the Messiah was to come of the Seed of David, and out of the Town of Bethlehem, where David was, Joh. 7. 42.

Yea, the words of the Prophet Haggai, (2. 6, 7.) applied to Christ's Kingdom Heb. 12. 26. that God would shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations should come; and that he would fill that House they were then to build (to wit the Second Temple) with Glory; these words, I say, shew, that Christ's Day was the Desire of all Nations, and that he was the Person whom the Godly did delight in and expect: for what Reason, appears by the

### III. OBSERVATION.

That the Certainty of the coming of Christ's Day was the Spring of Joy, the Basis of Comfort, the Stay and Support of their Spirits to Believers of old, in the days of their Pilgrimage on Earth.

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For this we have the words of S. Peter, Act. 2.25, 26, 30. That David (being a Prophet, and knowing that God had smorn with an Oath to him, that of the fruit of his Loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ, to sit on his Throne,) spake concerning Christ, that therefore did his Heart rejoyce, and his Tongue was glad, and his Flesh did rest in hope. And Heb. 11. 26. it is said, that by Faith Moses esteemed the Reproach of Christ greater Riches then the Treasures in Egypt. And of Simeon it is said, that he waited for his coming in the Flesh, as the Consolation of Israel: and accordingly, when he had seen him, he took him up in his Arms, and blessed God, and said his Nunc dimittis, Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, according to thy mord; for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation, Luk. 2. 25, 28, 29, 30.

And conformable to these was also the frame of Spirit in all the Holy Believers when he appeared in the Flesh. As persons over-joyed, they were in a Rapture of Comfort; so as that they could not contain themselves, but must break out into holy. Hymns of Praise. My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, (said his Mother,) and my Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour: For he hath regarded the low estate of his Handmaiden. And, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; (said Zacharias,) for he hath visited and redeemed his People; and hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the House of his

Servant David.

When the Wise men of the East saw his Star, they rejoyced with exceeding great Joy, Matth. 2. 10. And when the Angel had told the Shepherds, that he brought them good Tidings of great Joy which should be to all People, of the Birth of Christ, in the City of David; supon which there were with the Angel suddenly a multitude of the Heavenly Hoast praising God, and saying, Glory be to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Good will

none

will towards men; ) the Shepherds in haft went to view Christ in the Manger, and upon their Return glorified and praised God. Hallelnjahs were then the Exercise of all that knew of his Birth: and fo they were of all the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, when they did by Divine Revelation foresee, and by Faith wait for his Coming.

And the same spirit of Joy shewed it self after in all those that saw his Day, either with their bodily Eyes,

or by the Eye of Faith.

When Andrew finds Peter, as over-joyed, he tells him, We have found the Meffrah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. When Philip finds Nathanael, he is in the same tune, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph, Joh. 1. 41, 45.

And of fucceeding Believers S. Peter faith, I Pet. 1.8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with foy unspea-

kable and full of Glory.

So that I may, by an Induction of Particulars, raifing the Observation from the Hypothesis to the Thesis, conclude univerfally, That the Day of Christ is to all Believers the Spring of their Joy, the Basis of their Comfort, the Stay and Support of their Spirits, in the days of

their Pilgrimage upon Earth.

The Reasons whereof are common to all Believers. Fesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Though the Mystery of the Gospell was not so clearly nor so fully revealed before, as it was by the Apostles Preaching, but from the beginning of the world was in a fort hid in God: yet in no Age was there Salvation in any other, none other Name under Heaven or ven among men whereby they must be saved. He onely hath been the Way, the Truth, and the Life: so that L11 2

none come to the Father but by him. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and all the rest of the Holy Saints in foregoing Generations, had Salvation by Faith in Christ, as really as S. Peter and S. Paul, or any of the Holy Martyrs and Confessiours in the Catholick Church.

It is true, the Knowledge of Christ was not so clearly revealed to the sons of men before his Coming in the Flesh, as it was after, when the Day-spring from on high visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, to guide our feet into the way of Peace. And therefore John Baptist exceeded all the Prophets foregoing, he being the man that could say, Behold the Eamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World. Yet the Apostles, yea the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, that can preach Christ Born, Baptized, Preaching, Dying, Rising, Ascended into Heaven, is greater then John the Baptist, as having seen and heard that which many Prophets and Kings desired to hear and see, but did not.

The Knowledge the Patriarchs had was Vespertine:

the Apostles and ours, comparatively, Meridian.

Besides, before Christ's Ascension, the Knowledge of him was not so amply revealed: for though a few of the Gentiles found Christ; yet the Way of Salvation was not prepared before the face of all People, so as that Christ became a Light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the Glory of his people Israel. But when S. Paul was made the Apostle of the Gentiles, Christ was set to be a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be for Salvation unto the ends of the Earth, Act. 13. 47.

S. Peter was taught to call none common or unclean, but to preach to the Gentiles, as being those to whom also God had granted Repentance unto Lefe, Act. 11.18. Whence the same way of Salvation was vouchsafed to Cornelius that was to Abraham: Cornelius had his Faith

imputed

imputed to him for Righteousness, as well as Abraham. God put no difference between them and us, having purified their Hearts by Faith, saith S. Peter, Act. 15.9. He was the God not onely of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles: seeing it was one God which should justifie the Circumcision by Faith, and Uncircumcision through Faith,

Rom. 3. 29, 30.

And hence, as Abraham rejoyced to see Christ's Day, fo did the Wise men of the East: and in all that were made Holy Converts by the preaching of the Gospel, there was the same Joy, for the kind, which was in Abraham; all with the same Spirit of Faith glorified Christ, though some with more enlarged Hearts then others. In the Effects of this Joy, Praising God, Loving Christ, and Adhering to him, there is the same Mind in all, the same Hope, the same Expressions; though not to the same degree in all. In some Ages the Joy was more extensive then in others; in some Persons more intensive then in others: yet in all that believe in Christ it was and is bottomed upon the same Ground; a Fruit of the same Faith, shewing it self by the same Expressions of Thanksgiving and Love, Praifing God, Following Christ, and Loving all his Members. So that we may fay, All Abraham's Children by Faith rejoyce to see Christ's Day; they see it, and are glad. And thus my Text comes home to you all.

### APPLICATION.

You profess your selves Believers in Christ, and A-braham to be your Father: if you be in truth such, then it will concern you to walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham, who rejoyced to see the Day of Christ, and he saw it, and was glad.

I deny not, that in this time of Advent there uses

to be much Rejoycing, pretended to be in Remembrance of Christ's Nativity; yea, that many long for this Time, as the Time in which they are wont to rejoyce: nor do I except against Rejoycing at this Time. But is our Rejoycing such as was in Abraham, a Rejoycing at Christ's Day out of Faith; a Rejoycing at the Performance of the Divine Promife, for the bringing of Light and Salvation into the world, whereby all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed? Is the sense of the Spirituall Blestings in Heavenly things (I mean, the Knowledge of God's Counsell, the Mystery of his Will in Reconciling the World to himself by Jesus Christ, not imputing their Trespasses unto them, the Adoption of us Gentiles into his Family, with other Riches of his Grace,) the grand Motive of our Joy? Are the Expressions of our Joy like those of the Shepherds, who glorified and praised God? of the Blessed Virgin, who brake out into her Magnificat Anima mea, My Sout doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour ? like those of Zacharias in his Benedictus, Bleffed be the Lord God of Ifrael, for he hath vifited and redeemed his people? like those of the Heavenly Hoaft, who fang, Glory be to God in the highest?

These Hymns I acknowledge are sung in our publick Meetings: and it is the Wisedom of the Church, that you are prompted to remember them. But what is done in your Houses? Is any such Spiritual Rejoycing there? any such Praising of God for sending his Son into the world, that you might live by him? Are not rather your Rejoycings carnal, more like the Heathen Saturnals, sull of Looseness, vain Sports, and Debauchery? Are not your Feasts like the Riotous Bacchanals, rather then Christian Festivals? Yea, is not impious profaning of God's Name more frequent there, then holy Conference of such as are filled with the Spirit

Sermon XXX. The Patriarch's Joy.

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Spirit of God, singing and making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord?

If it be so, I may say to you as Christ did to the Jews, If ye were the Children of Abraham, ye would doe the Works of Abraham. If Abraham were your Father indeed, if you did believe in Christ, as Abraham did, you would rejoyce in the Remembrance of Christ's Day, as Abraham did: you would rejoyce in Christ, as born a Saviour from Sin, a Teacher sent from God, to direct you in your way to eternal Life; that so you may live as Abraham did, as Pilgrims on Earth, as those that seek a City to come, even an heavenly, Heb. 11. 10, 13, 16.

Oh that your Faith, your Joy in Christ, might be such a Fruit of the Spirit of God, as may make your Conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ: not such as is more like theirs whose Belly is their God, whose Glory their Shame, who mind Earthly things. Let our Conversation be in Heaven, from whence we look for Christ, to change our vile Bodies, into Bodies of Glory like his; and to give us an Inheritance above. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant unto us all, for the Merits of his Son; To whom, with the Blessed Spirit, be ascribed, &c. Amen.

LAUS DEO

# ABRAHAM'S PILGRIMAGE.

# The Thirty-first SERMON.

# GENESIS xij. I.

Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy Country, and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father's House, unto a Land that I shall shew thee.

HAT (after so great a Defection of the World from God, as was upon the Dispersion of Mankind, occasioned by the Giant-like Attempt of building the Tower of Babel,) God might have a Race of men who should own and adhere to him, he singled out Abraham from his Fathers, who dwelt on the other side of the Floud, and served other Gods, as it is Josh. 24. 2, 3. And having removed him with his Father from Ur of the Chaldees, (where it is likely the Sun was worshipped in stead of God,) unto Charran; his Father being dead, he translated him into the Land of Canaan, which he promised to give him for a Possession, as it is in S. Stephen's Oration, Att. 7. 4, 5. consonant to the words I have now read to you, Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy Country, &c.

Sundry ways God used to speak to the Ancients; by Prophets, Dreams, and Visions. So Gen. 15. 1. The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a Vision: and

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Gen. 17. 1. The Lord appeared unto Abram: and, speaking of this very Precept here given him, S. Stephen saith, Att. 7. 2. The God of Glory appeared unto our Fa-

ther Abraham.

Some kind of glorious Apparition there was then, when God gave Abraham this Mandate. The Business, no doubt, being (as in After-ages, so in Abraham's days) most famous, God would have it begun by an illustrious Manifestation of himself, that he might be known to be the God of Glory; and all the Gods that Abraham's Fathers served, to be but Vanities and Lies; not Numina, but Nomina, not Gods, though so called. And that there might be the firmer Impression on Abraham thereby, God thus shews himself, and speaks.

However God speaks to us, we are to hearken: be it in a Dream, or by a Prophet, if it be God's Voice, it must be obeyed. But then most heed is to be taken, when God makes known his Pleasure in an illustrious

Apparition.

This Command to Abraham was, doubtless, of very great Concernment, both to God's own Glory, and Abraham's and all Believers Advantage. And therefore it is of no small importance for us to consider the Charge which God here gives to Abraham, Get thee out of thy Country, and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father's House, unto a Land that I shall show thee. Wherein we have,

1. A Journey or Motion commanded him, Get thee.

or, Goe thou.

2. The Terminus à quo of this Motion, or the Place whence he was to goe, Out of thy Country, &c.

2. The Terminus ad quem, or the Place whither he

was to goe, Unto a Land that I shall shew thee.

1. The Journy or Motion which is here injoyned Abraham is a Transmigration, expressed thus in the Hebrew.

brew, Lec Leca, as if it were, Vade tibi, Goe thou, or, Goe to thy self: which is by some conceived a Pleonasm or Redundance of speech; by others Emphatical, as if it were said, Goe for thy self, or thine own Benefit, intimating, that himself was the Finis cui, he for whom or whose sake that Pilgrimage was injoyned.

2. The Terminus à quo of this Motion is threefold. First, From his Country. Every man's own Country, where he was born, is likely very desirable to him. That Ulysse, whom the Poet sets out as a great Tra-

veller,

(Multorum Mores hominum cognouit & Urbes,) preferred his own Ithaca before all the places he had been in, and longed much to see the Smoak ascending

from that little Island.

And therefore it might feem to Abraham (if he had not been guided by a Principle above Nature) an intolerable Injunction, and such as he might have complained of with those who bemoaned their Condition thus.

Nos Patriæ sines, nos dulcia linquimus Arva. Which was yet farther aggravated, in that Ur of the Chaldees, or Mesopotamia, was no doubt a pleasant Country, situated (as it is conceived by the Description Gen. 2. 14.) in or near the Garden of Eden: yet thence he must be gone, as an Exile or Eugitive, ne-

ver to return again.

Secondly, He must not onely leave his pleasant Country, but also his pleasant Company, his Kindred, those with whom he had been acquainted, and enjoyed their Society, from his Childhood even untill old Age. Even these (though by Nature and long Custom endeared to him) he must relinquish at God's Command.

Thirdly, which is yet a farther Grievance to Na-M m m 2 ture, ture, he must be packing from his Father's Honse; from him to whom natural Affection had knit him, and from those who were as his Flesh: he must quit even them, so as to put off all respects of Humanity and natural Affection, (which otherwise had been great Impiety,) in Compliance with the Divine Ordi-

nation. Which is yet farther aggravated by

3. The Terminus ad quem, the Place to which he must remove. It was an uncertain Place: he was not acquainted whither he was to goe, he knew not where he should rest the Soles of his Feet; whether he were to be seated in the Desarts of Arabia, or in the Land of Palestine; whether among savage people, or such as seared God: onely he was to rest satisfied, that he was to goe to that Place which God would shew him. And that was enough to him, who followed God, and was acted by an implicite Faith (not such as the Jesuites vow to their Superiours, who often command them villanous Attempts, but) in God, who is always Righteous in his Commands, and Good unto all that walk with him and are persect.

If any ask, why God did thus impose this Journey on Abraham: I answer, Doubtless it was not for any such superstitious Ends as the Papists injoyn some men Pilgrimages, to the intent they should satisfie for their Sins; or as other persons by Vow undertake them, for the obtaining a greater Holiness, or to merit thereby. For these, as they are undertaken without God's Command, so are they performed without his Blessing. But we may conceive the Reasons of

the Precept were,

1. To separate him from that Idolates Country, where Nimrod (that mighty Hunter before Lord) had erected his Kingdom: (as it is Gen. 10.8, 9, 10.) and which, it is very probable, was a Country in

which Bel and Baal were worshipped, and the Worship of the true God persecuted. Which may be gathered or conjectured from what we find, both in the places before cited, and Gen. 14. as also from such Records of Antiquity as we have in Scripture, or other Authours, who make mention of the First Monarchy of the Assyrians.

Nor is it improbable, that Abraham had been a Prophet to them to warn them of the Judgments hanging over their heads, though without Success; as Lot was to Sodom, though without prevailing for its

Conversion.

2. But the chief End of God therein was, to prove Abraham, whether he would obey God: as he did after by a more difficult Task, when he injoyned him to take his onely Son Isaac, and to offer him as a burntoffering on one of the Mountains which he should tell him of, Gen. 22. 2.

3. That he might of him and of his Seed raise up to himself a peculiar People, who might (as Abraham did) follow God, and depend on him entirely; and fo be Witnesses against all the Abominations which

the Old Serpent had infected the World with.

4. That, in Abraham's Example, all Believers might fee what their Condition that will adhere to God must be in this World, to wit, they must be in a movable estate, be ready to relinquish all at God's Command,

and to be disposed of as he pleaseth.

For we are to conceive, that which was here enjoyned was exemplary, as being so propounded by the Authour of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (11.8.) And as in obeying of this Command Abraham shewed his Faith, not settling either in Ur, or Charran, or Sichem, or Bethel, or Egypt, or any other place, as his fixed Dwelling, but moving hither and thither; and that

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not

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not as necessitated thereunto, but of Choice, in Submission to the Divine Will, and with expectation of a settled Habitation above, as the Apostle saith, Heb. 11. 15, 16. So it is God's Intent, that Abraham should be

in this our Pattern to follow.

We reade of Cain, when his Conscience pursued him, that he fled from the Presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the East of Eden, and there built a City. He thought to relieve himself against his accursed Condition (which the Terrours and the Furies of his evil Conscience haunting him brought him into) by his stately Building, and such a voluptuous Life as carnal and worldly Enjoyments could afford, when he was destitute of God's Presence with him, and the Light of God's Countenance upon him. And his Example was followed by his own Progeny, and his Brother Seth's Race also for a great part.

But Enoch walked with God, and he took him. Noah also, when the Earth was corrupt before God, was perfect in his Generation, and walked with God; and therefore at God's Appointment he prepared an Ark, to save himself and his Houshold. And Abraham leaves his Country, sine animo revertendi, so as to yield to a total Privation of all his Contents there, without any expectation of Regress into that Place, or to that Society which he had there with those of his nearest Relati-

ons.

The like we reade of Moses, that he for sook Egypt, notwithstanding his enjoyment of Dignity there, being called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and thereby in a possibility or likelihood, if not assurance, of Advancement unto the Throne of that most rich and fertile Kingdom: and chose rather to keep Sheep in Madian, to endure to see the Afflictions of God's People, whout avenging them. After which he returned

into

into Egypt, being commissionated by God, and endured the Wrath of Pharaoh, with the Frowardness of the Israelites. The remainder of his life he spent in the barren and desolate Wilderness, with innumerable Vexations from those unruly People which he had led out of Egypt. And all this onely because it was thus appointed him by God, and having respect unto the Recompence of Reward which he should give him.

And indeed, God would have all his Saints to be thus minded. It is that which all the Seed of Abraham by Faith in God must and do expect, an uncertain and ambulatory Estate in this World; no immutable or fixed Habitation, no Paradise upon Earth. David saith of himself and his Ancestours, Psal. 39. 12. I am a Stranger with thee, and a Sojourner, as all my Fathers

were.

And to shew that the matter is not mended in this respect since Christ's Coming in the Flesh: As Christ had no place certain, not so much as a place whereon to rest his head, but went up and down, and at last suffered without the Gate of Jerusalem: so saith the Apostle, Heb. 13. 13, 14. it is God's determination, that we goe forth unto him without the Camp, bearing his Reproach; for here we have no continuing City, but we seek that one to come, even the New Jerusalem that cometh down from God out of Heaven, Rev. 21. 2, 10.

And indeed there are very urgent Reasons wherefore God so ordereth the Estate of his People, that it should be thus changeable and unsettled, both in respect of his own Glory, and their Good. On both which accounts they comply with God in his Design, as being regulated in their Resolutions and Motions by Faith in God, whom they apprehend as their best

Friend, and most faithfull Guide.

1. For first, hereby God refutes that malicious Slan-

der which the Devil suggested to God against 70b, as if he feared and served God onely, because God had made an Hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he had on every side; had blessed the work of his hands, and his Substance was increased in the Land, Job 1. 10. But God (though he permitted Satan to bereave Job of his Goods and Children and Ease, yet) proved the Devil a Liar, and Job true-hearted, whom no Sufferings could make to curse God. And in the like manner he fuffers the Patience and Obedience of his Servants to be tried; whom though he keeps low, yet they own God, stick to him, and shew themselves to be sincere-hearted, and find him in the conclusion to be a God to be trusted. And by this their Adherence to God, and Experience of his Fidelity, they become Witnesses for the Lord, that he is God, as it is said Isa. 43. 12.

2. By this way of God's Providence in disposing thus of his People, their Spiritual and Eternal Good is greatly promoted: for they learn hereby, not to love the World, and the things that are in the World, so as to chuse their Portion in them; not to conform themselves

to the men of this World.

As standing Pools gather Mud, when running Springs yield clear Waters: so it is with men who are at Ease, that have no Changes, who live at Rest and in Pleasure. They surfeit of these earthly Dainties, are infected with worldly Thoughts, have no taste of the Rivers of God's Pleasures, are settled on their Lees, as not emptied from Vessell to Vessell, their Taste remaineth in them, and their Sent is not changed.

A Dives, a man that hath his Goods encreased, minds nothing but building his Barns, and taking his Ease; thinks not on his Death, on Judgment to come,

or being rich towards God.

# Sermon XXXI. Abraham's Pilgrimage.

But the Lord, to prevent this Danger, (whereas a men of this World become as Beafts fed to the full, a kept onely for the day of Slaughter,) orders his Sheep to be removed from Mountain to Mountain, to be in bare Pastures; yet to have sufficient, and, which is the chiefest of all, Acquaintance and Communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and his Holy

Spirit.

And indeed the Enjoyment of these Spirituall Bleffings doth make abundant Compensation for the Want of that Ease and Pleasure which the Grandees of the Earth have. For should God let them enjoy brave Palaces, with much Abundance, and all those Delights that others are Masters of; yet these would be found (as Solomon proveth them to be) Vanity of Vanities, not without their mixture with Cares and Fears concerning the suture, if not with Vexation of Spirit for the present: Diseases and Discontents being incident to such a state of Life. And that which would most annoy God's Children in such a Condition is, that a full Estate breeds much Sin, as Ulcers of Pride, and a Spirit of Slumber in forgetting God; besides the Evil to which worldly Society exposeth them.

Abraham lived at more Ease, with much more Content and Delight, in his Tents, on the Hills of Canaan, then Lot did in Sodom, which he chose to dwell in where he was made a Prisoner first; and when rescued by Abraham, he vexed his righteous Soul from day to day with the unclean Conversation of the Sodomites, in hearing and seeing their unlawfull deeds: though at last

he were freed out of that cursed Place.

And therefore every one of us is to conceive God speaketh so to him, as he spake Mic. 2. 10. Arise and depart, for this is not your Rest, because it is polluted. Nor can we be partakers of the Divine Nature, without N n n escaping

Abraham's Pilgrimage. Sermon XXXI.

caping the Corruption that is in the World through Lust,

Pet. 1.4.

Saul's Court was not so good to David as the Wilderness, in which he was hunted as a Partridge on the mountains. Then he made the sweetest Psalms, and sang them with the most pleasant Melody, when, forced to leave Saul's Court, he fled to God as to his Sanctuary. Yea, it was better with him when he was in the Field against the Philistines, then when, being at home at Rest and Ease, he walked on the Roof of his house, and saw Bathsheba.

Sure this present Estate, with all its Advantages, is but a transitory Condition; The World passets away, and the Lust thereof: and therefore it is not so eligible as the Favour of God here; much less as the beholding of

his Face in Righteousness hereafter.

And the worst Conditions Saint can be in, who depends on God, and follows him, (as Abraham did,) is but a Storm: Nubecula est, cito transbit; it will quickly blow over; as that Holy man said of the Arian Persecution. This light Affliction, which is but for a moment, will work for us (if we man humbly with our God) a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are Temporall; but the things which are not seen are Eternall, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

### APPLICATION.

And now, I befeech you, take this matter into your ferious Confideration. If you be indeed Children of Abraham, and expect to be in Abraham's Bosome, the Confe that God took with Abraham must not be unbasant to you. If you will bave your Good things in this

Sermon XXXI. Abraham's Pilgrimage.

this Life; you must expect to have the Rich man's

Portion in the next.

You that give your minds to rife at Court, or to be Rich in the City; to build fair Houses, to fill them with costly Furniture, to store them with the most dainty Provision; to goe in the bravest Attire, and to mind your Ease and Delight; bethink your selves how surable this is with the Divine Contrivance, and the Af-

fections of Saints.

I deay not but an Abraham may be rich, and yet bleffed; a David may be great, and yet happy. God may (and, I doubt not, doth) chuse some (though not now) Rich and Great in this world, to be Heirs of the Kingdom which he bath prepared for them that love bim. But then it must be so, that they love not their Riches, nor their Greatness, but God; that they be as Abraham was, ready to leave all for God, to obey God in the harshest Commands, to wait upon God with Patience for his Help. They must have, as Moses had, a Will resolved to suffer Affliction with God's People, rather then to injoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season; to esteem the Reproach of Christ greater Riches then the Treasures of Egypt. They must be as Christ was, not of the World, though in the World; not from beneath, but from above; having God's Glory in their Eye, Christ's Example as their Loadstone; seeking the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and directing all their Motions and Affections towards Heaven and Heavenly things.

I press you not to sell all that you have, and give to the Poor, as Christ did the young man whom he loved: nor to sell your Land, the Primitive Christians did, and lay them down at the Apostles feet. Yet I must tell you, that if you will follow Christ, you must, (in praparatione Animi) in the purpose of your Heart, doe

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these things, and more too, even hate your own Lives, if the Command of God, the Glory of God, the Kingdom of Christ, the Good of God's Church, shall require

it, or stand in competition therewith.

I do account of the Friers Vows of voluntary Poverty, perpetuall Continency, and regular Obedience, fo far from true Sanctity, that they are rather mere Snares, and like those Services of which God said by the Prophet, Quis quasivit have de manibus vestris? Who hath required these things at your hands? they being neither undertaken by God's Command, nor having any Promise of his Blessing or Acceptance.

Those Princes therefore that have laid down their Scepters, and thrust themselves into Cloisters, have been befooled by superstitious Priests, and have sound cause of Repentance for that their ill-grounded Devo-

tion.

But yet this you must doe if you will love God: you must not love the World, nor the things thereof; you must devote all to God, relinquish all at his Appointment; you must use the World, as not abusing it, knowing that the Fashion of this World passeth away. You must be as Pilgrims on Earth; lay up your Treasures in Heaven, and have your Heart there; seek your Rest with God in Christ: and in the mean time walk with God, use all for him, and be content to be at his Disposing in Life and Death, as Abraham was; and then you shall sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom of Heaven. Which the Lord grant, &c. Amen.

### LAUS DEO IN ÆTERNUM.

Anni) in the purpose of touristeet, doe

A MEDITATION on God's Mercy, being the Subject of most of the Sermons herein contained.

7HEN we seek after God, we consult with his Works ; but when we study to know what he is, we have recourse unto those Notions which are above his Works. The Creature helps us to find him out : but his Power, Infinity, and Mercy, instruct us to understand him. Neither do these Attributes equally acquaint us with him. His Power informs us that he is God; but his Mercy much more. For by his Power he onely conquered that Difficulty which Nature presented him with in her first Principle, (Nothing:) but by his Mercy he overcomes Himself. It sometimes reverseth the Sentence past against a Nation; and so it makes him incurre the imputation of Mutability: Sometimes it pulls back the stretched-out Arm, and, like the Angel that aid hold on Abraham, violently detains the execution of his Fury; and so it upbraideth him with Impotency. It is not then enough to say that it exceeds all his Works, unless we adde, it is that also whereby he is subdued unto Himfelf.

As God, who is our utmost Aim, having placed himfelf at the Journey's end, is All Mercy; so are the Ways that lead unto him: His Ways are Mercy and Truth. And as he is onely found by those that seek him: so is he onely sought for truly by those that travell in this Way. The Mercifull; and they onely, shall find Mercy. The N n n 3 Light communicates its Glory unto that Eye alone which bath a native Light and Splendour to entertain it: even so doth God reach out his Mercy unto that Soul which is before made capable by an innate Tenderness and Compassion.

To forgive and to have Compassion are the peculiar Affects of Mercy. If I forgive mine Enemy, I have Mercy on my self; for to him that forgiveth, much also shall be forgiven: But if I have Compassion on the Distressed, I have pity on my Saviour; for 'tis him I feed, I cloath, in the persons of the Hungry and of the Naked.

God hath given unto men a Nature which inclineth them unto Pity; and therefore Cruelty is a Vice of the Will's begetting. Since then Nature hath no Inclination had enough, out of which it may spawn so vile a Brood: I will not be at so much pains as to force the Soil, that a Weed may grow; nor love that Sin, which will not be entertained unless. I disclaim my Nature.

God once commanded Sacrifices, that he might have Mercy upon Men; and yet he was willing to have spared them that, if they would have spared one another. I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, was his demand of old; but now much more: for since he hath taken away the Law of Sacrifices, it remains that we imploy all our Obedience in the observance of that Law which is left behind, which is the Law of Charity. God hath abated something of his own Worship, that we might have more leisure to perform those Duties which respect one another.

If we would have God commune with us, as once he did with the Jews from his Mercy-feat, it will be first required of us, that, like the Cherubins there placed, we

carry our Faces one towards another, not turning aside from the Distressed, nor obliquely glancing upon any as averse from Peace. God seems to instruct us by that Fabrick in the Ark, that he then makes his Approach to us from his Mercy-seat, when we turn face to face, that is, when we are alike minded one towards another.

God, that he might reconcile his Justice to his Mercy, and so save the delinquent Creature, became severe to himself: so much he loved us, that he seemed to love himself less. If we cannot reach the height of this Document, which is, to die for an Enemy; yet we may goe so far, as not to incurre our Destruction by an affected Hatred.

As God's Mercy is transcendent, and runs through all his other Attributes ; so ought ours to be : our very Acts of Justice and severest Rigour must be Acts of Mercy. As it is our Compassion to the Body that makes us cut off a gangræned Member: so must our Tenderness of the whole, season that Severity which is directed against a private person.

The whole Frame and Course of things seem to lesson us to this Duty. If we look towards that Heaven which must be the Seat and Mansion of the Saints, 'tis boundless and uncomprehended: so much delights his Mercy to exspatiate it self, that it will not be confined: whereas his Wrath and Vengeance are content with a narrow Room for the execution of his Justice. He hath made Heaven of a vast Capacity, which betokens an Infinite Goodness: but the Place of Torments hath he bounded with streight Dimensions, lest his avenging Justice should be exalted above his Mercy in the largeness of its Dominion. If God have scarce afforded his just Vengeance a Point or Nnn4 Angle

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Angle in this great Universe; then ought not Man, in so small a Room as his Heart, give any entertainment to unjust Cruelty or Hardness; but study rather to enlarge it, that he may take in a greater measure of that Mercy, whose Property is to be boundless and transcendent.

Page 53. line 13. for delight your Bodies, reade defile your Bodies.

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